# THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES

C de VARIGNY

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THE

# WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES

BY

C. DE VARIGNY

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY*

ARABELLA WARD

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NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1895

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THE MERSHON COMPANY PRESS,
RAHWAY, N. J.

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# THE WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES.

## CHAPTER I.

The Birth of a Civilisation—A World in Process of Formation—Woman's Part at the Beginning of American Colonisation—Different Elements among the Colonists—North and South—Puritans and Cavaliers—Antagonistic Ideas and Traditions—Establishment of Mixed Schools—Their Dangers and their Effect—Beginnings of Social Life—American Women at the Commencement of the Nineteenth Century.

### I.

EUROPE is becoming Americanised. In one century, between the years 1789 and 1889, she cast upon the shores of North America more than fifteen million emigrants. Until 1860 she flooded the United States with the product of her manufactories and thrust upon them her literature, her ideas, her arts and artists, her fashions and styles, her outlaws and adventurers.

Like a dry and sandy soil, the new earth absorbed everything, assimilated every-

thing—the good and the evil, the clear waters with the muddy. Then, out of these different elements, by the genius of the race, by the influence of the climate, by freedom of thought, and by an intellectual, religious, and moral culture, there arose another civilisation. This civilisation has certain affinities with ours, yet presents unexpected contrasts to it. In its turn, it reacts on Europe, which its tourists invade, and where its roving millionaires exchange their homes for establishments so sumptuous as to rival in luxury, elegance, and comfort, not only those of the high-born aristocracy which is vanishing and which they envy, but of the moneyed aristocracy which their wealth is crushing. In their turn they initiate us into their ideas, their morals, and their customs. They do this, not as timid, hesitating *parvenus* in dread of ridicule, but as people certain of success, who smile at our prejudices, emboldened by an assurance acquired through experience. In return, these civilisations suffer mutual drawbacks. They react one on the other, and change more or less rapidly and deeply, according to circumstances. Above all, they vary according to the activities involved.

Antiquity recognised only two of these:

brutal conquest and intellectual conquest; strength of arms and charm of eloquence and of art. Each has helped the other. Murderous war has become methodical and scientific; the book and the newspaper have replaced the tribune, which has grown too limited for its audience. Men write more and speak less. Finally, to these influences a third is added, which in olden times was either unknown or else despised, yet which is more helpful, more subtle, and more powerful than any other—the influence of woman.

For a long time woman amounted to little; she was an accident, as it were, in the history of the people as in the life of man. She is much to-day; and already setting aside old customs, our historians, travellers, philosophers, and moralists study not only a nation's politics, its methods of administration, and its economics, but they do more than this; they inquire into its social life and customs; into the realm of which woman is the centre, and where she alone holds sway and determines, now and again, those great events which impel a nation onward. Whether we approve or not, we cannot deny the broadening power of this woman-influence. Napoleon I., who was strongly opposed to it, severely rebuked

Mme. de Staël for entering into politics, and she replied, "Women should not be blamed for their interest in the affairs of a country, when for that country they lose their heads." The argument admitted of no reply, and there are many more that resemble it. That which astonishes us is not that a part—and the largest part—of the human race has at length won its share of influence, but that so many years were needed in which to win it. Yet precisely because woman's progress has been slow, her influence makes itself the better felt.

This influence rarely shows itself in the clear light of day. It is not a public affair, so to speak, and therefore less of a responsibility. A woman's social laws depend upon her will alone. She promulgates them, observes them, and makes others submit to them. The chief work is left to man; but woman, by the strength of her influence, is the propulsive power by which we may take the measure of our civilisation. The standard rises where her influence is most marked; it falls where this influence is weak and vacillating. She seems in these modern times the low-water mark of progress. If, like everything new, she has her fanatical followers, she has her slanderers too; reckless enemies,

who do more for her than her most devoted friends. Was her future greatness foreseen, I wonder, by those ancient law-makers and philosophers who, after reducing woman to servitude, then reproached her for having the vices of a slave—these Fathers of the Church whose logic she frustrated, and who so greatly reviled her?

Plato, who affirmed that he who failed in this world would in the next be changed into a woman, was asked by Hippocrates, "What is woman?" and he replied "A disease."

St. Jerome painted her in colours no less sombre, when he said, "All women are very evil and are inspired by the devil." According to St. Thomas, "Woman is an accidental and superfluous being." In still harsher language, St. John of Damascus tells us that "Woman is an evil animal, a hideous worm which makes its home in the heart of men." St. John Chrysostom writes, "She is the source of evil, the author of sin, the gate of the tomb, the entrance to hell, the cause of all our misfortunes." According to St. Gregory the Great, "She has no sense of goodness." Erasmus calls her "A stupid and silly animal, but for all that, pleasing and gracious; a woman," he adds, "is always a woman, that is to say, foolish."

The evil things recorded of her would fill a folio. The largest library could not hold the volumes that have been written on this subject. One can state positively that in Paris alone more than one thousand such novels and other works appear annually, yet still, whether beloved or not, she is none the less triumphant. With what proud disdain she bears unflinchingly the terrible criticism of the most pessimistic of philosophers: "O men, wise in your deep and mighty science, you who have thought, who know where, when, and how everything in nature is united, what is the reason of this love, and of these kisses? Put your subtle spirit on the rack, and tell me when and where and how *I* came to love, and why?"

So says Burger, and Schopenhauer puts the same question. He asks, furthermore, in what this strongest and most mysterious of all realms consists. He is amazed that it can so torture the world's great souls; that it can thrust itself into diplomacy, troubling it with its trifles, thrusting its love letters and locks of hair into the portfolios of statesmen; that it upsets everything and turns the whole world topsy-turvy. He blames "the sex with broad hips, long hair, and limited ideas." Rather than call it

beautiful, he claims it were more just to name it "unæsthetic." So much for the physical side; and as for the moral—according to his notion, "Nature refused to woman strength, and gave her instead the art of deception, to protect her weakness. The lion has his teeth and claws, the elephant and the wild boar their means of defence, the bull its horns, the cuttlefish its ink, with which to discolour the waters: and so woman has deceit, born in the finest as truly as in the dullest natures. It is as natural for her to use it on every occasion, as it is for an animal to use its natural weapons when attacked."

Schopenhauer does not forgive Christianity for having changed the happy state of inferiority in which woman was held by the ancients. He says: "The Eastern people have a better idea of woman's position than have we, with our gallantry and our stupid feeling of reverence, the most absolute proof of our German-Christian ignorance." Is it not this, in short, which has created the "lady," whom he holds in deep and bitter hatred? "The European woman, the object of Asia's scorn, and whom Rome and Greece both mocked at, is a monster—the offspring of human folly, a mere machine for spending money."

Such in fact is his feeling against Germany, for the stand that she has taken in this unwise production, that he concludes thus: "In case of my death, I make this confession, that I despise the German nation because of its infinite stupidity, and I blush to be a member of it."

In spite of this last stroke the success which Schopenhauer won in Europe did not reach to the United States, although he strongly admired that country without understanding it, and which, understanding him, liked him only moderately well. The "lady," the butt of his bitter gibes and jeers, not content with having conquered the New World, is now in a fair way to Americanise the Old.

## II.

Every nation forms its own conception of woman. Ideas, like language, vary. The same thought may be expressed in many different ways. With the French, woman is an ideal, embodying every exquisite detail of civilisation. The Spaniard still thinks her the Madonna of his shrine. In Italy she is a garden flower; in Turkey, a convenient article of furniture. We all know the naïve complaint of the young Arabian

girl about her husband: "Before marriage he used to kiss my foot-prints, but now he harnesses me with the ass to the plough, and makes me work."

The Englishman, the predecessor of the American, saw in woman, above all else, the mother of his children, the mistress of his home. Unsociable by taste, by nature independent, his city life is one of restlessness, and he submits to it only that he may win with ease the living he best loves, that of a country home. Deeply imbued with biblical traditions, which are familiar to him from his fireside discussions and from the reading of the Scriptures, he has acquired these two characteristics—respect for parental authority and a desire for a large posterity. He retains, too, his taste for a nomadic life. From this he derives the instinct which drove men to seek a greater field of activity in the Indies, in Canada, Australia, and at the Cape, and which caused them to settle and to people English colonies. It is the same instinct which leads the man of business to spend some time each year in visiting Europe, in hunting in Scotland, in catching salmon in Norway and Sweden, or in travelling in Egypt. It is this, too, which drives these bold explorers to the heart of Africa, and to the ice of the

North Pole. Domestic by occupation and necessity, the Englishman has the wanderer's instincts—the wish to camp out, to change his abode, to see beyond his horizon, and to breathe a different atmosphere. Moreover emigration appeared natural to him. It carried with it none of the unpleasant thoughts which prevail when success is quite impossible where fate has placed one. He brought with him those instincts and ideas, to plant in the new soil which he colonised. He transmitted them to his descendants, and so it came about that he was led to the shores of the New World by two causes: first by religious persecution; and then, by the desire to make his fortune.

Thus, an offshoot from the mighty English trunk, he took root and grew, bearing fruit in time; for he did not emigrate alone. His wife, his sons and daughters, came with him, and with him shared his hopes and fears. He commanded, they obeyed. He gave judgment, and his word was law. When in 1620 they embarked on the *Mayflower;* when in 1630, a thousand strong, they emigrated to Massachusetts Bay, there to find the religious tolerance and political liberty which Charles I. had refused them, they did it not as vanquished rebels, nor as hopeless fanatics, but as loyal subjects, as free

Englishmen, who came to spread their tents on a soil whose remoteness would assure their independence. Almost all belonged to the class of those who, though not rich, were, nevertheless, in easy circumstances. Coming originally, for the most part, from Boston and Dorchester, they gave these names to their new settlements, begun with prayer when first they landed, and with the remembrance of the mother-country embodied in these names, and in that of New England, given to their adopted home.

A short distance from the shore rose the forest, dense and illimitable. It extended northward to the majestic stream of the St. Lawrence and the Canadian frontiers; and westward to the great and unknown lakes of Ontario, Erie, and Michigan, and to the rich prairies of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, which were discovered a century later by two Englishmen, George Flower and Maurice Birbeck. With hatchet and fire the colonists made great clearings in the forest, enlarged the glades, utilised the wood in building huts, and made arable the soil. They carried with them the necessary implements, with whose aid were to be planted their future crops. It was the rough life of the pioneer and not the wretched one of a poor settler. The men builded, laboured,

planted; the women attended to their domestic duties, prepared the food and mended the clothes, until evening brought the family together around the common meal. A general prayer followed, some Bible reading, a religious exhortation from the father, and then another prayer. It was a simple and a wholesome life, full of work and religion; with no time for vain regrets and idle dreams; a calm and serious existence; not monotonous or empty, but one in which the mind and body were always active. Their efforts were rewarded by a growing ease, by the comforts won through foresight and labour, by the knowledge of all trades which comes from the necessity of learning. One was at once architect and builder, breeder and farmer, woodman and carpenter, trapper and hunter—in short, everything. Each year showed fresh progress, a wider domain, an increased harvest, a greater number of cattle, a growing prosperity in all things.

New England became populated. The emigrants had nothing to fear from the Indians, few in number and ready to hire out their services. Between 1630 and 1640, twenty thousand English Protestant colonists crossed the Atlantic. The women were by no means lacking in boldness nor fearless-

ness, but it was not until the religious change which England brought about in passing from Catholicism to Protestantism that woman played an important part. She felt the influence of reform as did man. Christianity had given her liberty, but Protestantism freed her from further restraint. It gave her equal rights with man; it recognised even her natural intelligence, even her faculty of insight and of reason, and her duties and responsibilities in this life. She was free to live as she wished, even to marry as she wished. Thus she moved with greater ease in the broader realm of her religious ideas, conforming to them or not, as she wished. She retired within herself, and meditated within her conscience, where none but God might look. A feeling of limitless responsibility arose in place of her former passive obedience, and within her was born a strong and independent soul. Then was she indeed the equal of man. Free, now, this woman mentally from all the restrictions of her childhood. Bear her and her family three thousand miles away across an unknown ocean on which navigation is as slow as it was perilous; place her on foreign shores, encircled by the solitude of an endless forest, deep and vast; give her this new life, where she feels that she is not

only useful, but necessary, and where she may assume her share of a common burden ; let her husband and children demand much from her—and then, comparing her strength with her task, you will find one equal to the other. Faith will sustain her. The very thought of her usefulness rouses in her a courage forgetful of self. Her mind is full of different occupations, and becomes stronger. She works and plans, and amid constant activity she satisfies one of the most urgent demands of her nature and of her heart, viz., to feel that she is the centre of a home, and indispensable to those whom she loves. The more children she has, the richer she thinks herself.

The boys helped the father, the daughters the mother, and the race grew. As yet woman had neither rivals to fear, nor temptations to conquer. Isolation was her pedestal, and she grew in the solitude of the modest home, where she was queen. That period was a happy one. If the grain rose thick in the beds between the tree-stumps blackened by fire, it grew also on fertile soil, which the plough had scarcely scratched. So, too, the children multiplied in the log cabins. Fever, which inevitably accompanies a clearing of the ground, carried away the weakest, as at the beginning it

had laid low the less robust of the settlers; but the gaps were filled, and those who survived, strong and vigorous, were the beginning of a great nation. Then, too, the climate was healthful. The forests grew, new settlers invaded them, making clearings in their turn, always pushing farther off the black wall of trees which slowly gave way before them, and there was left as the result of their toil a rich green earth, a stranger to sunlight, to be sure, but which, under its rays, put forth a golden harvest. The solitary places were filled. From the window of each hut other huts could be seen, within which lived and toiled fellow-workers and fellow-thinkers. All were free and independent, each in his own home; but there existed no longer the uncertainty of isolation. In case of danger, illness, or accident, one could help the other, and aid in the common fight against Nature. An elementary grouping, in which each woman was a centre sufficient in itself, whose birth and rapid development we have followed.

Germs of fishing-villages, like Yerba-Buena, with its 479 inhabitants, which became a city twenty years later—San Francisco, which claims 300,000 population,—encampments of hunters, like Chicago,

which have more than a million, did not rise in this way. The English colony took root, unconscious of its strength, and still more ignorant of the future. Wholly absorbed in his rough labour, the pioneer thought only of the extension of his land. But as the farm grew, as the family increased, the home became more beautiful, more comfortable, and better protected. A certain degree of civilisation was introduced on the day when, relieved from some of their burdens, the daughters had a part in the home of which the wife, the mistress of the house, took care, and which she now had time to beautify. Flowers were cultivated, as well as vegetables. In the evenings the mother did some light work, while the daughters attended to the household duties. During the day the men hunted and the deer-skins made thick carpets. The surplus of the farm products was exchanged for European goods. The colonist's hut became a house. He camped out no longer. He lived. In this rising world decided individualities and tastes developed without restraint. Every talent was useful, and therefore welcome. Of what need to oppose them, or to compel them to turn where they would bring about only mediocre results? Independence submits only to the task of

being useful, of contributing to the happiness of others, of doing a bee's work and not a hornet's.

At that time there existed the authority of the head of the house, before which everything yielded; of the mother of the family, who had charge of the education of the little ones; and this authority lasted until the day when the settlement was able to build a chapel and provide for the maintenance of a pastor. Sometimes several settlements united together in the choice of one clergymen who visited each locality in turn, holding services. The chapel was the centre, first of the village, then of the town, and finally of the city. Thus Christianity came, and man embraced it. In the majority of cases, it was woman who demanded it. Not that men were indifferent, but they knew better how to calculate than to plan. A man doubts his own capabilities and his neighbours'; he hesitates before the difficulties and responsibilities which loom up before him. It is the wife who, pointing to her children, convinces him of the value of public worship, of the necessity of strengthening and maintaining faith by higher and more persuasive precepts than theirs. She has as much faith as he, and something else, foresight. After this question was decided,

came the one of schools, and it seemed as though the mother had no further wish. Together they provided the daily bread; they gave all they could—the fruit of their labour, which sustains life; they preserved and kept in their children and in themselves the religious thought which caused them to leave everything, sacrifice everything, even their native country. It remained for them to give to their children the instruction which they themselves had received, and which, although primitive, made free beings of them, capable of believing and thinking. Then, like the first, this latter problem, too, was solved.

When several settlements had united they built a school—a simple hut, common to all—to which they called a master, who, although of no great accomplishments, could teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to the young generation, too unwilling as yet to give to study more than a few hours every day. Strange instruction that, and strange schools, those, in which girls and boys sat together, studying the same lessons from the same books! Nevertheless, from that rude hut came the woman of the next generation. Rude and rough as it was, and shocking to our own ideas, it was the starting point of the civilising influence which developed

in those children a chivalrous instinct at that time still unfelt; the respect for her who later was to justify the American saying, "In the United States, woman is queen."

This influence which the future had in store for her, the woman of the North at that time possessed and used only within the limited home circle in that very home which, built at the price of so much labour, was about to become uncertain and unsafe.

From England came new settlers, whose presence should have increased the power and strengthened the safety of the first comers, but who caused new and unexpected disturbances. They claimed their part of the land—passed beyond the first settlers, forcing their way through the forest, pushing it before them, and at the same time driving back the Indian who dwelt there, whose hunting ground and whose home it was. He lived there and needed, in order to live, not a few acres only, like the white man who plants and reaps, but great tracts of territory where he might hunt the game on which he subsisted, and secure the furs and skins in which he traded. The game fled before the invaders, and the Indian was forced to follow it further into the forest, his old and once

silent home, but which now resounded with the hatchet of the colonists, with the crackling of the fires which they lighted in order to burn the weeds and destroy the stumps scattered throughout the glades where, daily, new huts arose, to be replaced later by substantial houses. Sheds and granaries surrounded the cleared fields, which were at last inclosed by hedges and railings.

At this gradual intrusion, the Indian at first was amazed and then enraged. His complaints were unheard. From being well treated and even courted by the first settlers, who feared him, he became suspicious and troublesome, like a landowner whom one dispossesses without right and without compensation ; a threatening enemy whom men had just cause to fear. The Englishman's inborn scorn of an inferior race increased against these superstitious and cruel pagans who rebelled against every form of civilisation as against all religious instruction ; who scalped a conquered enemy, and offered human sacrifices to their bloodthirsty divinities. It is true that the Indians were the first masters of the soil, but they knew not how to hold it. By right, the land belonged to the more intelligent race who cleared it, who made it valuable, who watered it with the sweat of the brow, who

held it in the name of God and of the King, and who would not give it up. This meant war with the Indian. The settlers accepted the inevitable, and began their preparations. Their farms were transformed into fortresses in which they banded together as a single body.

Such a condition of affairs was necessary if they were to renounce instinctive and voluntary isolation, and bring together their fellow-patriots who, although led thither by the same aspirations, having the same language, ideas, and religious beliefs, nevertheless put their personal independence above everything, and jealously shut themselves up within the narrow circle of their family. It was indeed necessary to break down the barriers, to join together in common cause against the threatened attack of the common enemy. All for one, and one for all, became the watchword. They met and decided on a code of signals to be used in case of danger; they elected leaders and made ready their fire-arms. In each colony all the able-bodied men were enlisted; from settlement to settlement they made ready for battle. They asked England for aid, but she had none to give. Instead of soldiers, she granted a charter. The colonists made good use of this, for it gave them the

right to the land in the name of England, whose possession it was "by right of discovery and by first settlement." Charles I. then fell in the conflict with his Parliament, and the English Commonwealth, under the Lord-Protector, Oliver Cromwell, had enough to do to rescue Jamaica from Spain, to check the growing navigation of Holland, and to keep Scotland and Ireland quiet.

The settlers could no longer wait for aid. The time for that had now gone by. The fight was upon them, when the Pequot Indians began to burn and pillage the settlements along the Connecticut River. In those long and obscure contests, not only was the courage of the settlers great, but the fortitude of the women was astonishing. The annals of the times tell us that they were as brave as the men, warding off many an attack with the aid of the daughters; handling their muskets as they would a distaff; brave, no matter how many the assailants, and not hesitating to bury themselves under their burning homes, rather than fall alive into the enemy's hands. A merciless war it was, without quarter from either side. Great acts of treachery were committed, which made a void about the settlements and which cut down the Indians like ripe grain. So far was he pushed into

the forest that there was no further thought of following him. Then, after a time, men could breathe again. The effort had been great, but the emigrant remained master, and as a proof of this still held fast the colony of the North, where he had stood so firm.

Woman was again raised a step higher, as the companion and equal of man. As the common danger had increased, as it had tightened the bonds already strong, as it had brought kindred spirits together, so it united the settlements and bound together the scattered colonies. The first league was formed in 1643, between Massachusetts, Plymouth, New Haven, and Connecticut, under the name of New England, a confederation which was the cradle, so to speak, of the great American Union.

## III.

We have now endeavoured to sketch woman's position, her influence, and her characteristics, in the settlements of the North; later on, we shall find what time and education have done for the modern American woman. But this Northern woman was not the only type existing at the time. Simultaneously there appeared another, differing in conditions but not in origin; one

which presented a striking contrast to the first. In our day these two types are united, without either having lost its identity, and from this union has sprung the American woman as we know her; the characteristic result of a civilisation other than ours, destined, perhaps, to take her elder sister's place, and one whose influence was felt long ago, although unconsciously. A short time after the Puritans fled from the religious persecution of the Stuarts to colonise the North, the defeated subjects of Charles I., in their turn, sought the haven of the New World, already harassed by anarchy and civil war. It was a strange fate which threw indiscriminately upon distant shores those who, holding their religion and political independence above all, had not hesitated to leave their fatherland. Strange fate, too, that which from the exodus of voluntary exiles, of zealous Protestants and devout Catholics, of passionate liberals and fanatical royalists, created the citizens of this great Republic. Instinctively, the new settlers went southward. They had nothing in common with the Puritans of the North, except race and language. Their politics, their religion, even their ideas of social life, were different. The emigrants of the North belonged to the

middle class; to the once triumphant party of Cromwell, which slew the King and usurped his power. Virginia was a royal colony and a loyal one. She had her charter of incorporation from a King. The royalists, emigrating, settled there, and that there might be no doubt as to their feeling, they called it the "Old Dominion," in distinction to the Commonwealth of England, which they hated. "Old Dominion" meant to them the old royal land of the sovereign, who, though a defeated martyr, still sheltered them. Eleven years later, they celebrated the restoration of the Stuarts and the reign of Charles II.

Royalty, too, was a religion and had its stanch followers. Here, too, woman held the first place, perhaps because she is more apt to become enthusiastic for the principle which underlies a permanent individuality, than for the abstract principle represented by transient personalities. Her ideal demands an idol, a shrine; and for those women who were royalist and Catholic by birth, family, and education, the idol had been shattered, the temple profaned. So they embarked, as desirous as the men to leave a country whose past was fast disappearing, and thus was brought to America a new element.

The race-trait was the same in the Northern settlers as in the South. The union of the settlers was no more desired by the South than by the North. The Virginian planter was as isolated on his plantation as was the New Englander husbandman on his farm. Both required large estates. It was not until later that the social instinct, created and developed by out-of-door life, made itself evident; but from the beginning these settlers, as in England, needed a home, large or small as the case might be. They needed land, and also servants, and tenants who did not exist; but for whom they substituted slaves. Everywhere slavery was tolerated, but it existed in the South as nowhere else. The Puritan accepted it also, but always with a feeling of dislike, as a sort of makeshift, and a restricted and limited one. He feared its despotism over his family and himself. His conscience condemned it; he preferred free labour, which, in his harsh climate, the nature of his tillage made necessary. Not so, however, in the South. Many slaves were needed both on the tobacco plantations and in the households. Tobacco was not only a product; it was coin. Salaries, merchandise, even taxes were paid in it; and once every year English ships carried it to Eng-

land as part of their cargo, exchanging for it such articles as the colonists would take.

What strikes one first of all in regard to these two distinct emigrations, notwithstanding their common origin and instincts, and the fact that they came from the same land to the same land, is their difference of tradition, of social atmosphere, of education and of life. The royalist settler brought to Virginia with the last remnants of his fortune, his ideas, his fears, and his hopes. Lord or not, as it might be, he was English, and as such a man of business, who knew what he was about; accustomed to handle estates, to carry on and manage large transactions. On this new continent, where the still useless soil was to be of such value, he speedily amassed a new fortune. He enjoyed a monopoly in the tobacco which Europe craved, and which his slaves produced at the lowest possible cost to sell for the highest price, and the demand for which increased in proportion to the increase of cultivation. In this new country woman's influence was supreme. In leaving England, she did not leave her habits and traditions. Every emigrant, rich or poor, carried his own world with him—an invisible world of ideas, the result of his early training, or bequeathed to him by preceding genera-

tions. To this world, even though freed from his country, he was for many years a slave. Is not this the germ of that individuality, which made the settler differ from the native, who thought himself superior to him whose lands he occupied, and whom he trod down and suppressed? In this respect alone the settler felt himself superior to the Indian, his neighbour; he was the country's chosen and predestined ruler. An aristocrat by birth, with strong race and class prejudices, the newcomer, woman, strove to implant her ideas in this new soil; to revive the distinctions of rank and caste; to teach to the modern American woman her own feeling of social superiority, her respect for ancestry, for name, and for descent—ideas which contrast strongly with the republican feelings of a later day.

Already, in 1773, the Harvard students were classified, not according to age or merit, but according to the position held by their parents in the social world. Mistress and Lady of the Manor, the Southerner fulfilled her duties and claimed her privileges. Her husband's home was noted for its hospitality. The Southern "gentlemen" had preserved not only the narrow life of the court of the Stuarts, but also its framework. On their prosperous planta-

tions rose great mansions, resembling the English castles, with their massive chimneys, pointed roofs, mahogany staircases, long and narrow windows, and wide piazzas. Social traditions also were retained. The memoirs of Mrs. Quincy, who revives this lost world in her writings, show the people faithful to English manners and customs; ceremonious, using a haughty courtesy towards inferiors; maintaining their rank and position; putting between the slave and themselves the intermediate service of a white major-domo, or valet. A lady of that period advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* that she was in need of a lackey—"One who would serve at table, clean the knives, lay the cloth, and carry orders; who knew how to cut and curl the hair, who could speak French, who would be as honest as the times would allow, and as sober as he knew how to be."

Mrs. Peace Hazard of Newport, R. I., relates a story of how her grandmother, after having divided the greater part of her fortune among her children, congratulated herself upon her return to "a simple life." She had reduced the number of her domestics to seventy. She still had six thousand acres of land and four thousand sheep, whose fleece was suffi-

cient to clothe her entire household. Her dairy required twenty-four slaves, each of whom had charge of twelve cows, and whose duty it was to make from a dozen to twenty-four cheeses a day.

The residence of the Lee family at Marblehead cost ten thousand pounds; that of Godfrey Malbone at Newport twenty thousand pounds; enormous sums for that period. The Wentworth house at Portsmouth contained fifty-two rooms. It was a free-and-easy life which the colonists led, and luxurious in a primitive fashion. It was a life which left to the woman her customary duties, and to the husband and sons sufficient leisure for hunting, fishing, racing, and other sports. A new race grew up, which felt itself superior by blood and birth, as well as by habit and the responsibility of command; by a refinement of manner and an intellectual pre-eminence in the entirely English pursuit of physical exercises. It was a race which, when there came to be an American Union, would give it legislators, statesmen, warriors, governors, and administrators, a Congress, and an army,—a race which would assert the supremacy of the South over the North, until the time when it should itself fall in the bloodiest civil war that the world has

ever seen. Meanwhile, these Southern settlements were a sort of prelude to the great future. Wholly royalist by tradition, they were, before all else, independent by instinct. With them their inborn feeling gave way before another. They loved England, they honoured the King, but they were Virginians, and if, in the War of Independence, some few remained faithful to the mother-country, the greater number broke away, and voluntarily took up arms, leading on to battle and to glory the Northern settlers who followed them, and who gratefully gave to them the duty of directing the troublous destinies of the Republic which unconsciously they were establishing. The fight was an heroic though a bloody one. The women willingly gave to it their husbands and sons, and even in this war they showed distinctive characteristics.

Occasionally were seen the chivalry and courtesy of Fontenoy. A vague odour of the old aristocracy seemed to linger about the cradle of this utilitarian Democracy. Two Virginian colonists, Washington and Lee, took command of the armies of the growing Republic, and to them flocked numbers of volunteers, almost all Frenchmen. When, in 1781, Washington disembarked at Newport, he was saluted by four French regi-

ments, the Bourbon, Soisson, Sainton, and Deux-Ponts; by Rochambeau, by the Prince de Broglie, by the Viscomte de Noailles, by the Duc de Deux-Ponts, afterwards King of Bavaria; by Lauzun and Admiral Ternay; and by the Adonis of the century, Count Fersen. In the midst of four thousand brilliant red-and-white uniforms, bearing standards on which was embroidered the fleur-de-lis, stood Washington, at the head of the Continental troops, whose worn and soiled regimentals and tattered flags were the witnesses of their past battles. Amid the applause of the smiling women, on whom the soldiers' glances lingered, the American general advanced, while the cannon thundered out salutes worthy of a French marshal. In the evening, Rochambeau gave a ball which Washington opened with dignity, dancing the minuet with the belle of Newport, Miss Champlain. The French saw this, and taking the instruments away from the musicians they played the "Conquering Hero," amid the applause of an enthusiastic audience. A battle followed the ball, and the gay dancers marched bravely to the attack, took Yorktown, and forced the English army to surrender and withdraw. "Only one discordant note was heard," says Mrs. Quincy, in her jour-

nal, "and that was the more than cold reception that Washington and the French armies received from the German settlers."

To this war, which lasted for eight years, Virginia alone sent not only 26,678 men, but almost all the officers for the 231,791 soldiers. The Northern women had offered resistance, but the Southern never showed lack of courage or resolution. Patriotic during the entire period, woman's influence told, when at last independence brought peace and the social life of the South dawned in the North. New York was already a city, the great port of entry to the sea and to the whole continent. In 1789 its population amounted to 33,000, the most of which were emigrants, merchants, tradesmen, and shipowners; the beginning of a cosmopolitan society (curiously described in letters of the times) in which the Dutch element of 1621 was entirely distinct from the English. But even then there existed that feminine exclusiveness which was afterwards so strongly developed in New York, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, and throughout the South and the West; an exclusiveness as rigid as it ever was in England. Mrs. Knox, wife of General Knox, the Minister of War, was the leader of the *bon ton*, and society's model; an odd one if we

may judge from a description in one of Dr. Manasseh Cutler's letters. He writes: "Her table is served after the French fashion. As to her, she affects (on account of her husband's position) a bold manner which is not pleasing in a woman. She wears her hair frizzed in front, and built up at the back, about a foot high, over a sort of head-piece made of wire, which it covers but does not hide. From this float black gauze streamers to her waist, and are held in place by a huge comb. She is enormous, like her husband. Both are considered here the most monstrous couple in the New World. On the other hand they are most hospitable; always ready to welcome strangers; always giving dinners, which in themselves are an indispensable passport to every newcomer."

To the aristocracy of birth which was incarnate in the Southerner, was added a new aristocracy, that of the official world, which revolved about the President and his Cabinet, one in which a social decree was as important as the affairs of State, but the influence of which scarcely passed beyond the limits of the political capital of the time.

It was a world in itself, curious in more than its mere name, and one which we shall have an opportunity of studying later. At

this time it was but just born. Congress was as yet without a fixed meeting place. It moved from city to city, and even in case of great need a quorum could be called only at great cost. Membership for which to-day there is so much dispute, was despised at that time. The distances were great; the expense of a session was heavy. To accept George Washington's resignation it was with great trouble that twenty Congressmen were called together, the smallest number required for a vote, and they represented only seven Colonies. A simplicity wholly republican prevailed, from the beginning, in this official world which was composed of the President's Cabinet and of the foreign representatives. George Washington was economical, and Mrs. Washington, whom the Northerners reproached for having introduced into the growing Republic "the luxury and etiquette of a Court" offered to his guests only "a cup of tea or coffee, some smoked tongue, some roast meat, and buttered toast." At nine o'clock she would remind them that the General kept early hours, and all left the house on foot, preceded by a servant with lanterns. When the President was "at home" a butler announced the guests, Washington bowed without shaking hands, a circle formed

about him; he spoke a few words and then withdrew. One cannot imagine anything more formal. Mrs. Adams, wife of the Vice-President; Mrs. Hamilton, of whom Brissot de Warville says, "She added the candour and simplicity of an American to all the other feminine attractions"; Mrs. Jay, "imposing but agreeable"; Mme. de Bréhan, sister of the Comte de Moustier, Minister from France, "an odd little woman fantastic and affected," to whom once, when Jefferson was repeating some gallant society talk to her, he declared that his country-women could not do better than to take her for their model—all these, with Mrs. Washington, composed the *élite* in the official salons, of which economical Oliver Wolcott wrote to his wife: "You can come here without fear; the example of the President and his surroundings make all display not only useless, but in poor taste."

When Congress, after having in July, 1790, decided to build on the banks of the Potomac its future seat, it chose Philadelphia as a temporary meeting place, until the city of Washington was ready to receive it. This city became the rendezvous of French emigrants, of visitors from the North and South, in short, the capital of the United States. It was renowned even then for the

beauty of its women, and strove to rival New York. "The belles here," wrote Rebecca Franks, afterwards Lady Johnston, "have more attractions in their eyes alone, than the New York beauties have in their whole persons." Brissot de Warville praises them warmly, but calls them affected; the Comte de Rochambeau reproaches them for over-dressing. Both are astonished at the young girls' freedom of speech and manner, although both pronounce them very fascinating. They were indeed this, according to the opinion of their contemporaries. When the English Minister said courteously to Senator Tracy of Connecticut, "Your American women would be admired even at St. James's," Tracy replied, "I do not doubt it; they are much admired at Litchfield Hill."

If in this society the customs, usages, and manners were still a blending of English and French, which the women copied and at times exaggerated, certain individual and characteristic traits stood out most clearly. Of these the most marked was the independence of the young girls who had so disconcerted Brissot, and their careless behaviour, which, however, was much modified by a womanly instinct, except for the masculine manner which some bold coquettes affected.

Miss Rebecca Franks tells of their meeting at early dawn, in order to drink punch; of their copying the men's voices, of their being mad over gambling. Coquettes they were and always will be, but they acted as did Minerva, who though she was the goddess of wisdom was none the less woman. The moment she saw from a pool of water that her puffed out cheeks disfigured her, she ceased playing the flute; and so these women gave up punch and card-playing, still retaining the art of flirtation, which they raised to a science. Mrs. Abigail Adams, wife of the second President of the Republic, gives an amusing sketch of the city of Washington and of life at the White House. Washington was hardly built, yet the President and his Cabinet and Ministers were there. The White House was only a huge incomplete barrack, with half finished rooms, without bells, without even its inner walls. It was a freezing winter, and at times the President could find no one who was willing to bring him kindling-wood from the neighbouring forest.

Mrs. Adams wrote to a friend: "I reached Washington last Sunday. On leaving Baltimore we were lost in the woods and went eight or nine miles, I should think, in the direction of Fredericksburg.

We were obliged to retrace our steps about eight miles, but we could not find the road this time either, and wandered about for two hours before meeting a guide. Here I am at last, not without some trouble, in a city which is such in name alone."

A little later she wrote again, saying that a schooner had just arrived from Philadelphia, with all the state furniture ; besides five little cases containing the archives of the Republic. In a postscript she added that the archives had been stored in a shop and had been burned during the night. Later she notes, as something exceptional, that on one day she received fifteen calls. "We want nothing here," wrote Gouverneur Morris, "unless it be houses, cellars, kitchens, agreeable people, amiable women, and some few other insignificant details."

Under Madison these needs increased ; the city grew, as well as the population, and there was a great deal of gossip about Mrs. Madison's receptions. She received, "gowned in a red velvet pelisse ; as though it was Sunday, and she going to service, on her head she wore a large hat trimmed with lace ;" "an elegant costume," writes Mrs. Quincy, "but not exactly suited to a home reception." On another occasion she writes, "She [Mrs. Madison] wore a black velvet

gown, and a turban trimmed with poppies. About her throat was a collar of the same colour." She was tall, strong, of pleasing appearance, and beloved by her entire household. Mrs. Monroe, who succeeded her in the White House, was a niece of General Knox. When on a visit to Paris, where she went with her husband, then Minister from the United States, she was called "the beautiful American." She had the haughty and condescending manners of a princess. A letter of this period describes her at one of her receptions, "surrounded by her two daughters, Mrs. Hay and Mrs. Governeur, as beautiful as their mother." "She wore a black velvet gown *en traîne*, which set off her perfect figure; her shoulders and arms were bare, her hair was raised and puffed, with ostrich feathers in it; about her throat was a rich string of pearls. There is always a strange crowd in her drawing-rooms. The Southern aristocracy elbows its way there among the democracy of the North. One meets John Randolph in his riding costume, booted and spurred; members of Congress in thick, greased boots; ambassadors in knee-breeches and silk hose." The *élite* preferred the receptions of the French ambassador to these mixed salons; those of Hyde de Neuville;

of Mr. Bagot, the English Minister, whose wife, niece of the Duke of Wellington, led the fashion; of Mrs. Jonathan Russell, where were always to be found the two belles of the day, Mrs. Hull and Miss Randolph, a granddaughter of Jefferson, whose grace was so much admired and whose sharp wit was so feared.

Society was still in a chaotic state, but one in which the constitutional elements were discernible. A new type had appeared, which tended towards social freedom. "America for Americans," said Monroe, and this caught votes. The settler became the American. More than thirty years had passed since the winning of national independence. The sons of the first settlers were imbued with the ideas and traditions of the mother-country; those who had fought and conquered, and who had established the Republic; Puritans and Liberals in the North; Loyalists and Royalists, but yet Independents in the South, each had a place in the New World. The race had grown. It had been differently brought up and with other ideas.

By principle as much as by necessity a special system of public education had been established. Girls and boys took the same courses, played the same games,

and were subjected to the same discipline. It was in these public schools that the new generation was formed; in these primitive and rudimentary schools, whose origin, character, and mode of teaching did not justify the fear which naturally enough was roused by the contact of the two sexes. The results of this education are worthy of notice; and here it is necessary to go back a step, in order to explain the difference between the American woman of that day and of this with her freedom of manner, her independence, and her instinctive experience. It is to these accounts, supplemented by personal observation, that we shall turn, and show in as clear a manner as possible the results of an education as diametrically opposed to our ideas as it is to our traditions.

## IV.

The first occasion on which I studied the details of an American public school was at the annual examination, a great educational gala day, which interests parents as well as the students and professors of Punahou College, established near Honolulu by the American residents of the Hawaiian Islands. Although a Frenchman I was asked to

preside, and I questioned the students according to a pre-arranged programme and assigned them their respective ranks. Theoretically, I understand the function of these schools, which correspond to our *lycées*, and which include the classes between our fifth grade and that of rhetoric inclusive. Punahou College was (except of course, in regard to certain interior arrangements which the tropical climate demanded) an exact reproduction of some of the smaller colleges which I have visited in the United States. Richly endowed, provided with an excellent faculty, with a complete course in science and letters, this institution accommodated about 150 students, among whom there were as many day students as boarders. The main part, a vast two-story building, well aired, looked out upon a large garden, upon a sloping lawn, and upon the sea, and contained the rooms of the principal and his wife, the recitation rooms, the court-yard, dining-rooms, infirmary, linen-closets, library, etc. The main building had two wings at right angles, inclosing a large playground, and containing the rooms of the boarding-pupils. The right wing shut in those of the boys; the west, those of the girls. Both sexes studied in the same

rooms, took their meals in common, and worked, played, and talked together. The youngest were twelve years of age, the oldest twenty. Although ignorant of none of these details, I could not resist wondering as to the practicability of the theory, of which I approve. Involuntarily, I recalled my own college days in Paris. I called up amusing pictures of my fellow-students; of our bold manner, under which was hidden a great depth of timidity and embarrassment; our jests, which ill concealed our romantic aspirations; a mixture of naïve credulity and ignorant precocity, childish illusions and affected scepticism which, with most of us, was a better learned lesson than that of any professor. I asked myself, without being able to answer, what would have happened if these young girls whom we followed with curiosity, who under their mother's wing passed us in the street—if they had been allowed to take part in our amusements and our work, to be our companions and our rivals every day and every hour, in classes as well as in the dining-room, in the playground as on the street? It was in vain I said to myself, that things are so here, for I cannot imagine them so where I have been educated. What appeared to me so simple

in the New World looked quite strangely complicated in the Old. I concluded (an easy conclusion, in that it cut short the difficulties and saved any deeper researches) that the American mind is not like ours; that "one man's meat is another man's poison."

Going deeper I ended by mastering the situation, by understanding and admiring it. For this, both time and a close examination were necessary. I had to study the mechanism, the turn of the wheels, as it were, and take into consideration those elements which are alike on both sides of the Atlantic, but which are cramped and falsified by our advanced and rather enervated civilisation. I can point out the advantages and the disadvantages of the system. The schools to which I refer were, in the first place, the result of circumstances, as we have shown—of the sparse population in settlements scattered at first, but which later on drew more and more toward a common centre. They were also, by reason of the traditions and the temperament of the race, and their religious influence and social conditions, the result of an intelligent and in every way healthful conception of life. We reach it by offering higher courses of

study and by giving greater opportunities to both sexes. We commence at one end; the Americans, at the other. Their efforts were rude and rough, but they discovered under the English traditions, which were rather brutal in the manner of education as in all else, those happy tendencies, still in a rudimentary state, which developed with time. The few documents of those days show us how the public and primary schools were managed where girls and boys together received the first and deep impressions of childhood. They show us the mode of corporal punishment that was inflicted, the use of the ferule, and that strange appeal to chivalrous sentiments which allowed the young boys to take upon themselves the punishment of their companions, and offer themselves as substitutes. Mr. Richard M. Johnston, professor in the University of Georgia,[1] gives among other writings a little sketch, made on the spot, of this singular custom. He introduces us into Mr. Lorriby's school. Mr. Lorriby, he says, "did not belong to the

[1] M. de Varigny is evidently citing his author from memory. The book to which he here refers is *Oddities of Southern Life and Character* by Henry Watterson (Boston, 1883); and his apparent quotation which follows is in reality a paraphrase.—TRANSLATOR.

category of severe masters. He was both good and diplomatic. A newcomer in the settlement, and poor, he understood very well how to act and how to follow out the ideas of those among whom he lived. He inclined towards gentleness, but on the slightest pretence he was ready to use rougher measures, if a desire for such was expressed. This, unfortunately, was the case. Some parents complained because no punishment was used. One of them unfortunately had heard the fable of the frogs who begged for a king, so Mr. Lorriby was nicknamed 'Old King Log.' Another parent threatened to take away his children and put his son on a farm and his daughter to mending the linen. They loved their children then as much as we do now, but they had odd ways of showing their affection. The parents were never better pleased than when their child had been punished at school. They appreciated instruction, but believed that in the ferule lay great virtues. The schools were, in some respects, caves of Trophonius. Boys and girls passed through them by a series of incomprehensible mysteries. The idea, then, was that the ferule was indispensable for inculcating knowledge and making it sink deep into the mind through the skin.

The generations who preceded us passed beyond that; it was our turn. I cannot explain this fact except by admitting that the minds of our parents were so upset by this method of teaching that they could understand no other, nor could they reason with any sense on the subject. They thought that men resembled beasts: that a dog was more faithful to the master who beat him, and that there was nothing better for a mule than to be worn out by fatigue and used up by blows, before finding himself face to face with a well-furnished manger.

"They themselves had been so roughly treated at school that they carried away with them an inexhaustible fund of gratitude. They heard with satisfaction their children's complaints; their accounts of daily flights from school gratified them. The less deserved was the punishment the more healthful it seemed. When the master without any visible motive chastised an entire class and made the scholars puzzle their brains as to the value of such proceedings, the mystery increased the physical impression, and the parents rejoiced mentally. It recalled their own young days, they said, and they concluded that since they had survived it, the system ought to be a good one. We meet in life with so

many blows whose cause and effect quite pass our comprehension! When Mr. Lorriby had done what the parents expected, he revealed himself in an entirely new light.

"One certain Monday morning he told us that we must expect a change of rule; and to tell the truth, we did not have to wait long for it. Before the end of the recitation more than one among us was rubbing his aching back. The girls suffered nothing, with one exception, and as this was the first time I had witnessed a like event, I was naturally impressed. The delinquent (neither she nor I nor any of the others knew what wrong she had done) was Susan Potter. She was twelve years old, tall and beautiful for her age. In bidding her at first politely to approach in order to feel his ferule, Mr. L. asked, as if the most natural thing in the world, and one which surprised none of us, whether among the boys there was someone who was disposed to take Susan's punishment upon himself. After a moment's silence and to my great astonishment Seaborn Byne, my neighbour, rose and offered himself as substitute. He did it with the bearing of a boy doing a deed of courtesy and fearing no consequences. Whereupon Susan, without a word or a sign of thanks, took her seat and settled herself comfort-

ably, so that she might lose no detail of what was passing. It was evidently not exactly what Seaborn had anticipated. This indifferent curiosity as to his fate made him regret his chivalrous offer, but there was nothing to be done. To cap the climax he was very fat. He more than fitted his clothes, and I am almost sure that my thinner neighbour would have come off better in the fray. But Seaborn was so fat that he offered a tempting target for the ferule which I almost forgave Mr. L. for using with so much freedom. Seaborn yelled, struggled, and rubbed his sides, his back, his entire body. When it was over he returned sadly to his seat, looking covertly at Susan. She was smiling. Seaborn's brother Joel alone pitied him, sobbing under his breath. 'Please do not cry.' said Seaborn in a threatening tone. Then he muttered between his teeth, 'If ever again I make a fool of myself for her I will consent to be smashed, then dug up, and smashed again.' What he meant by smashing, I never knew and he never told me, but I remained under the impression that it was something very disagreeable, and which he would avoid at any price. However this may be, Seaborn kept still. I saw him again years after, and I could not but feel

that this episode of his childhood had forever shattered his ideas of chivalry."

Continuing his narrative, the author shows us Betsy Ann, a pretty girl of sixteen, whose rising charms caused a fluttering in the heart of Bill Williams, the cock of the school, a strapping fellow of twenty. He tells us the story of this timid and awkward love, so forgetful of self. Betsy Ann was conscious of her beauty, which made itself felt on Mr. Lorriby himself. Besides, she did exactly as she pleased, until, as the result of a greater prank than usual, Betsy was condemned to the humiliation of receiving a blow from the master's ferule. Bill Williams interposed; he said that never in his presence should Betsy be struck. His build was that of one well able to protect her. No one doubted the result of an encounter between himself and Mr. Lorriby; he would come out of it conqueror. Nevertheless he respected authority, and in order to reconcile his love and his scruples, he offered to submit to Betsy Ann's punishment. But Mr. Lorriby understood; he guessed that Bill would not let himself be humiliated before Betsy Ann, and satisfied of good results from the affair, he pronounced a pardon. The rest may easily be imagined. Betsy was ashamed of her too

discreet protector. She might have loved him, if, less thoughtful for himself, he had more heroically protected her. But Bill understood nothing of this. Thanks to him she escaped from her escapade unhurt, and Bill himself had not suffered the humiliation of corporal punishment. Mr. Lorriby had perceived under his sangfroid the well-formed resolution to return blow for blow; but Betsy had neither seen nor sought further, and without saying a word turned her back on her defender. It was not enough to be chivalrous, but he must be chivalrous in a particular way.

## V.

Such a hero was "Old Hickory," as Andrew Jackson was called by his contemporaries. He was the most popular and the most daring President whom the United States have ever had, the most dangerous man who could have been chosen to govern the young Republic in the midst of a threatening condition of affairs; a man who had nothing in common with his predecessors, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and John Quincy Adams. He had neither their suavity nor their *savoir-faire*. He represented a different element, a national

type, which had put off the swaddling-clothes of the past and was scornful of present conventionalities ; which was bluntly assertive, but forceful, and far in advance of the times. Although in years Andrew Jackson belonged to a past age, there was in him the breadth of mind of the coming generation. He was not a statesman nor a skilled or wise politician, but an ardent patriot nevertheless. He stepped from the popular ranks, a favourite with the masses who had raised him to power because they recognised in him the instincts, the loves, and the hatreds of democracy. The young generation who flocked about him, and who shouted for him, was weary of the yoke of tradition, impatient to see at the head a representative of national ambitions, and one who would inspire American politics with a new force. It was another world, rising and asserting itself, and the women were neither less enthusiastic over it, nor less ready to demand from it their share of influence. Was it not a Betsy Ann, under the name of Mrs. Eaton, who reigned in the White House, and inspired in the impetuous President, as she had in the wise Bill Williams, an affection so deep as to cause him to confess himself openly her passionate admirer and devoted servant ?

"Evil to him who evil thinks." Platonic lover, he asked nothing and expected nothing. Hardly did he touch those rosy fingers to his lips. Chivalrous? He was, and like no one else. This rough soldier who in twenty obscure fights had risked his life against the Indians; who because, when a child, he had been beaten by an English officer for refusing to clean his boots, had sworn revenge and had defeated the English at New Orleans, and had killed their best generals, Pakenham and Gibbs; who, without waiting for orders, had taken Florida; and who, when elected President, had entered into the fight with the United States Bank, with the capitalists, with the South, with Congress, and with the foreign representatives—he the soldier, ardent, violent, rough, fell a slave to a woman, ready to defend her against the whole world, and to risk for her his popularity and a re-election. And who was she? The daughter of an innkeeper, the wife of a naval commissary, who had committed suicide in a fit of delirium tremens. Then she had married Mr. Eaton for her second husband. This was she who had fascinated Old Hickory at first sight. He himself was married, but Mrs. Jackson did not in any way trouble him. This estimable woman

from the frontiers, who had taken up arms against the Iroquois, calmly sat and smoked her corn-cob pipe by her hearth,* without bestowing a look upon her irascible husband. Mrs. Eaton presided over the receptions at the White House. She held its keys, and admitted only her friends. Not a shadow of scandal was breathed. She was like a heroine of Fielding's novels, irreproachable, but despotic. Mrs. Donelson, the President's niece, almost his daughter, had refused to recognise Mrs. Eaton, and had been sent to Tennessee by Jackson. Mrs. Calhoun, wife of his colleague, the Vice-President of the United States, hesitated to bow before the idol, so Andrew Jackson broke with his friend, who from this time gave up all hope of succeeding him. The wife of the Minister from Holland declined the honour of sitting by the side of Mrs. Eaton, and the President demanded that the Minister be recalled. Baron Krudener, Minister from Russia, and Mr. Vaughan, the English Minister, were more complaisant. They gave balls in honour of the reigning Queen—"Bellona" the papers called her—Bellona accepted

*M. de Varigny is in error here. Mrs. Jackson died before her husband's election to the Presidency.—TRANSLATOR.

them, and the diplomatic troubles with Russia and England disappeared. Clever Van Buren, who was a bachelor and an expert in flattery, paid court to Bellona, and became Secretary of State, then Vice-President after Jackson's re-election, and finally succeeded him in the White House, having defeated Calhoun, who was less diplomatic. Thus, by the hand of a grateful woman, he was carried to the highest rank. Notwithstanding her humble origin and disputed beauty, it was not in her father's inn, nor by her dissipated husband, that she was prepared for her rôle in life. Early in her first school, and later as the favourite and courted village belle, she had lived in men's society ; she had learned the secret of their weakness, had understood her own power over them, had used it, preserved it, and never wasted it. She wished rather to rule all men than belong to one. All that she had retained from her early education (less perhaps from her studies than from the contact with the boys, her fellow-playmates) had rendered her less susceptible, had made her completely mistress of herself, and therefore capable of governing others. Thus brought up, was not the American girl, from the first, superior to the English girl, her contem-

porary? They are two distinct beings. In the one, who is the grandmother of our modern girl, we note the same characteristics, the freedom of manner, the instinctive prudence, the self-possession, the consciousness of her every advantage. So in the man of that time we see both his respect for woman, learned early in the public school, and the feeling of chivalry which her physical weakness and her charms inspired. The development of civilisation and the growth of prosperity brought new elements into this primitive world which we have tried to describe, but they did not alter the groundwork, and the changes which they effected left intact the fundamental characteristics of the woman of the United States.

From the start, then, by force of circumstances, by her common suffering and trouble, and by her public education, she was man's companion and equal. At no time has she been inferior to him, there in America, as she has been in Europe.

## CHAPTER II.

Overmastering Influence of American Women—Their Rights and Privileges—Flirtation, Love, Marriage—Legislation for the Protection of Women—Its Abuse—American Circes—Breach of Promise Cases—Three Years of a Young Girl's Life—The American Married Woman—American Morals—Aristocracy and Plutocracy—Prevalence of Luxury.

### I.

On a new continent, whose limits were at that time unknown, a number of voluntary emigrants fleeing, not from the laws, but from party oppression, discontented rather than rebellious, exiling themselves without thought of a return, carrying everything with them—family and traditions—these were the circumstances which surrounded the American colonists. By force of circumstances, by isolation, by common danger, even by the rôle which events mapped out for her, and which we have already traced, woman proved herself the equal of man, and not at all his inferior, as she was in Europe, where she passed from her father's home under the no less despotic yoke of her hus-

band's authority. Her chains fell from her on the day when she reached American shores ; her part in life expanded. She was not only as useful but as necessary as her husband in their common labour, and her duties won for her the equality with him which she sought. If the laws did not explicitly state this equality, it was because woman did not demand it. Every right clearly defined is no less clearly limited, and woman had everything to gain by not stating her rights precisely.

As a child, the school is open to her, and from the tenderest years her weakness and her charms bring her friends and protectors. As a young girl, she is free. As a woman, the divorce laws allow her to break oppressive bands. Public opinion follows her and protects her at every period of her life. But she looks higher ; equality alone does not satisfy her. The circumstances in which she is placed confirm and second her ambition. Years pass, prosperity increases, civilisation broadens. In a larger and more worthy field of action man's duty becomes more absorbing and woman's less so. She is freed from the narrow duties of the first settlers ; she no longer, like her grandmother and mother, does the family cooking and sewing and the work of a servant. She

has time to improve her mind and make new acquaintances, and she reigns undisputed and without a rival in the intellectual sphere which man is early compelled to give up on account of his incessant labour. To her natural charms she adds that of the mind, of the superior culture and knowledge which man cannot long deny her. Her thinking and acting faculties are not now put to the same use as are man's. The cold and silent activity of man expends itself in every sense on a boundless continent, on a fertile soil, which repays his every effort, but which, in taking all his time, leaves but little for his family and none for the development of his mind. He knows the art of making money, but not of spending it, not of getting from it the comfort and pleasure which it ought to give. On this side woman is extremely clever. She acquires this art of spending, and practises it with much ingenuity. She beautifies her home, and makes it as well as herself, more attractive, and man's admiration for her increases. She becomes the spending, as he is the receiving, agent. She spurs him on to work in flattering his heart and his vanity. She profits by the leisure which labour has created for her, and to the natural respect which she inspires, as much in women as in men, is added the

respect which a superior intelligence wins for her.

Twice queen, her great power intoxicates her, and the worship which is given her, the homage which surrounds her, justify in her own eyes her caprices and her whims. Sure of everyone's respect, certain of finding in every man, whoever he may be, a protector and defender, of granting a favour in asking one, she lives at ease in this atmosphere of gallantry, which forced to be prolonged becomes commonplace, and which is addressed to her sex rather than to her individual self, yet whose privileges she does not hesitate to claim. Whoever has visited New York has had many opportunities of taking part in an episode such as Baron Hübner relates: *

"I was sitting in one of the cars which run along the principal streets of the great city. A slight touch of a fan arrested my attention, and I saw standing proudly erect before me a young lady, who was measuring me from head to foot, with a haughty, imperious, and even angry stare. I hastened to rise, and she took my seat without deigning to thank me by even a smile or a look. I was, however, obliged to stand the rest of the way, in an uncomfortable

* *Promenades autour du Monde.*

position, painfully holding on to one of the straps which run the length of the car.

"One day a young girl had driven an infirm old man from his seat, in an especially haughty manner. Just as she was leaving the car one of the passengers called to her: 'Miss, you have forgotten something.' She returned hastily. 'You have forgotten to thank this gentleman.'"

Such things are not exceptional, but it would be unjust to American women to attribute to all the faults of some. This assurance, this consciousness less of their rights than of their privileges, explains their independence and the reason why they can undertake, alone, long journeys. They are sure of finding everywhere that universal deference and the attentions which they reward, it would seem, by the sole fact of accepting them, and in exchange for which not even a word of thanks is necessary. For years they have everywhere been accustomed to a recognition of this indisputable sovereignty and universal respect. Everywhere they are at home, and they are conscious of the fact. In New York, the cosmopolitan city, the one city of the world which contains the most Irishmen next to Dublin, the most Germans next to Berlin and Vienna; in Chicago and St. Louis—these

towns of the West, which having made their fortunes, are now mighty cities—this obvious stamp of feminine royalty strikes one with great force. In every place, public or private, at the theatres, in the hotels, in the railroad trains and on board steamers, in the restaurants and in the shops, in the streets and parks, in the drawing room and in her father's house, woman is queen. All royalty is hers from the start, as we have shown. All royalty is hers from the fact of her existence, for she justifies it by her double superiority. She has derived her charms from the living source of all physical beauty.

Married young and for love, her parents have bequeathed to her the gifts of youth and love. In her are refined the characteristic traits of a strong and healthy race, which now and then, as in the West, are free from all admixture. There, however, where immigration has introduced, as in the Eastern States, a new factor—it is one which has modified the original type but not injured its form.

The Hibernian, French, Italian, and German blood mingled with the Anglo-Saxon has softened with its characteristic vivacity or morbidness, grace or languor, the outlines which the American woman in-

herited. Thus we find in this land almost every kind of plastic beauty—the voluptuous nonchalance of the Creole, the aristocratic purity of the Englishwoman, the expressive and mobile physiognomy of the Frenchwoman, the blooming complexion and slender figure of the Irish girl. From these races the American has borrowed what is best in each: and youth and love bring about elimination, marriage in the United States being, more than anywhere else, the result of an instinctive affinity. For a long time shut up within the distant walls of a continent but little visited, and possessing nothing which would naturally attract the curiosity of the traveller or the observation of the tourist, the beauty of the women, which was legendary among the naval officers and diplomats whose duties brought them to the coast or to Washington, made itself manifest on the day when facility of communication and the nomadic instinct of the race caused a regular exodus of rich Americans. Ancient Europe attracted them. Her monuments, palaces, cities, and museums became the object of regular pilgrimages—the result of a serious education, above all for the women. London, Paris, Florence, Munich, Rome, and Dresden saw American colonies settling within their

walls. They became fitful and changing kaleidoscopes, whose personal characteristics were constantly renewed and which grew and gravitated about a few rich, well-known, and established families. From this it came about that the American colony took possession of certain quarters in each of these cities that were especially liked; and the American woman made these her centres and lived there. Each centre was a foreign city in the midst of the great French, English, Italian, or German one.

There is an English proverb which says that seven or eight generations are needed to make a "gentleman"; three or four to make a "lady." Not so many as this are necessary for the American woman. She has the physical beauty of the Anglo-Saxon race, modified by circumstances, as we have shown; leisure, which man makes for her; intellectual culture; wealth, quickly attained; and the elegance and refined tastes natural to her sex. Europe did the rest.

Very proud of the beauty of their wives, their sisters, and their daughters, the Americans regard them as less of an honour to the race which bore them than to the usages and customs of their country. On this point, their opinion is worth noting. One

of them told me it one day, in one of those humourously ironical chats in which Swift excelled, and in which the coldly scoffing mind of the Anglo-Saxon glories. A great traveller, and a conscientious observer, chance brought us together at Madrid, and afterward at Naples, and one evening we dined with Mr. X. We met with pleasure ; we had common friends across the Atlantic, and nothing further was necessary for the beginning of intimacy. I was greatly pleased with his keen mind, a little paradoxical at times, but full of the unexpected.

At table, we spoke of the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon races. It is needless to add that his preference was for the latter.

"The future is in its hands," he said to me, resuming, after dinner, our interrupted conversation. "It will end by populating the world. At the beginning of this century the United States had only six million inhabitants. Now we are seventy millions. Already we reach toward South America. Oceanica is made up of the sons of our colonists. Compare with your French families of one or two children, these Western families, in which we count ten or twelve. From the point of view of the population you stand still, while we double in thirty years. The *dot* kills you."

"Why, how so?"

"There's not a doubt of it. Is there anything more absurd than a system in which the children's future is assured by the parents? It is the opposite of all truth; it is the world turned upside down, in which the elders deprive themselves for the younger; when those who no longer produce sacrifice themselves for those who are best able to help themselves. Even if this sacrifice assured their happiness it would be different, but nine times out of ten you make them unhappy."

He had begun, and there was nothing for me to do but to listen.

"You think that I am making paradoxes for amusement; but it is not so. Look before you at those three young girls; one is pretty, the other two decidedly homely. The one on the right has a crooked figure, her face is pale and thin, and her features drawn and weary. The next one, her sister, is hardly better looking. Both, as you know, have a large *dot*, and as you express it, great expectations; suitors flock about them. It is no less true that Nature, a harsh stepmother, if you wish—it is neither your affair nor mine—has condemned them to celibacy. Their father married, too late in life, a rich and poorly built woman. This

is the result. Well! these two young girls, homely and of feeble constitution also, are sought after by young men who will not love them, and with good reason, but who ask from a rich marriage the wealth which fortune forgot to have in their cradles and which they do not see the necessity of gaining.

"As to the other, she has everything that pleases, but without a *dot*, what will she find? An old man or an aged bachelor. This is her lot. Will the two ugly ones have children? We may doubt it. In any case we may hope not. So be it. But every ugly girl alone has not a large *dot*. There are pretty ones well endowed. I admit this; but is it not already too much to ask that chances be made equal? Do you not see that a father afflicted with two daughters, exactly alike, is forced to double his sacrifices to marry them, and that their marriage, whatever he himself may think of it, is no help to humanity? Left to herself, Nature gets out of the trouble to the advantage of everyone. It is a law of nature that a young man who is strong and healthy should love a young girl who is beautiful, strong, and robust. It is by the same law that they marry, and, as in fairy tales, shall have many children like themselves. Of

what use is it to buy at a heavy price a husband for a girl who does not want children, and who will give to the world a puny, sickly being, whose life she will save, if it is to be saved, by great effort, and for whose *dot* she will exhaust herself, in order that he in his turn may become the founder of a family like himself. In all things and everywhere, nature acts by elimination. Certain vegetable and animal products are forced to disappear, and imperfect germs are incapable of more perfect reproduction."

"In other words, you require the suppression of ugly women?"

"Total suppression—no; but not to stand in the way of it, and above all not to strive to perpetuate them any more than in the case of sickly and rickety men. A similar being costs as much and more to feed and to bring up than a sound and healthy being. You found societies to breed horses, the fowls of the barn-yard, the ovine and bovine races, but when a higher being is concerned, a man or a woman, you make at great expense an absurd system which is contrary to nature, the result of which is to perpetuate the ugliness and the degeneracy of the race. You deem it a simple and natural fact that a man in the vigour of life should marry an ugly girl, if only one with a good *dot*,

and you call this a 'fine match.' You find it easy and natural for a poor but beautiful girl to marry an old man who has lived his life as you say, but who is rich, and you congratulate the mother or friend who has brought it about. It enrages me to see these villainous acts. Nature herself is enraged, but she has her revenge; and in this lies the danger. You shut your eyes in order not to see it. However, the statistics are there, and they will enlighten you. Science, medicine, physiology, the courts themselves, din the truth into your very ears. You close them, but none are so deaf as those who will not hear. Your fathers wear themselves out over the *dot.* Your mothers hunt for heirs as sons-in-law and daughters-in-law. A few days ago one of them said to me: 'I want Ernest to marry, he does such foolish things; I am looking for a rich wife for him. Ernest could not live without money, and we do not mind about beauty. Would you tell us of someone?' Her Ernest is a great blockhead, badly brought up, in the habit of frequenting all sorts of bad company, thin, worn-out, already half paralytic. His devoted mother is looking about and will find some creature who is ugly, yet one with a large *dot.* They will marry; they will want to found a

family. May God keep the results from you!"

He paused for breath and continued:

"In the United States we are more logical. If we copy your fashions, we do not import your theories of marriage. We marry for love, and everyone is happy. One of my friends, a Chicago millionaire, has just given his daughter to a young merchant who is starting in life. On their wedding day he presented them with two thousand dollars to defray the expenses of a trip to Europe. They thought him very generous. The son-in-law works, and adores his wife, who makes him happy. I will wager that before six years have passed they will have six children and a hundred thousand dollars. With this, good-evening."

He shook my hand and left. My neighbour, a lady of some years, who understood English, had heard him, for I caught her whispering, as he left: "These Americans are all materialists."

## II.

We have described the colonisation of the Eastern States from the beginning, Puritan and Protestant, recruiting itself from the middle classes of the England of 1630,

hostile to the Stuarts, sympathising with the Commonwealth and with a republican form of government. In the South, on the contrary, which was settled by the partisans of the dethroned Stuarts, we have shown the preservation of the aristocratic English traditions, the system of slavery crystallising into an institution, the free and easy ways of the planter gradually taking the place of the stately life of the great proprietor. In the West, invaded and peopled at a later day, these two types met and intermingled, represented by adventurers from the South and East, and by those bolder pioneers who were eager for free life and more room, and who fell back before the advancing civilisation whose conventionality was irksome to them. Young and energetic, they peopled the Western solitudes with a progeny vigorous like themselves, and as large as it always is where the child is a help, and not a hindrance.

Hence arose three distinct types—the citizen of the East, the Southern planter, and the Western farmer. It is true that these conditions were modified, each section encroaching upon the other. The West became dotted with large cities; the East impinged upon the South after the War of Secession; the South was for a time ruined and favoured

emigration. But time had not as yet accomplished its work of coalition any more than it had effaced each characteristic trait. The East, the first of these three sections to be settled, became the most thickly populated, the most important, its great business centre being New York, the real capital of the Union, the "Empire City," as she calls herself. No other city of the Republic can rival her. Her population, her luxury, the brilliance of her receptions and balls, the wealth of her millionaires, the elegance of the women's toilets, make her the leader of custom and fashion, the city which gives law to all the others.

Society in Boston is more intellectual, more serious. Baltimore, Charleston, and Richmond are more aristocratic. Philadelphia is a happy medium, more fastidious, more reserved. There is more gaiety in New Orleans, more of a "go as you please" atmosphere in Chicago, and more wit and taste at Washington, where Congress holds its winter session and draws together the cosmopolitan world of the legations, of the Senate and House of Representatives; but in none of these cities does the social life reach the same degree of intensity that it does in New York, the paradise of the American young girl.

Here, better and to a greater degree than anywhere else, she can give free play to her taste for spending money, to her toilet, to receptions and balls, to flirtation and pleasure. The social life, of which she is the soul, is made for her, and American custom gives her the entire liberty that she longs for. The extent of this liberty has at times been exaggerated, and some have deduced a general rule from a few loud and noisy exceptions, and have attributed to the young New York girls a too bold manner. The truth, as it is, is enough, and presents a sufficiently disconcerting contrast to our French customs to need further accentuation. Fearless Amazons, the New York girls walk in groups, or are accompanied by an escort to whom they allow for the moment the honour of attending them in the walks of Central Park, or else they drive there in a light buggy drawn by a swift trotter. During the winter they make up sleighing parties or skate on the ponds. We meet them in the large shops and in the fashionable restaurants without other escort than a friend. The evenings are spent at some theatre or ball. The summer they pass at Newport, Saratoga, Long Branch, or Bar Harbour, where they display themselves at the Casino in such gorgeous toilets as might

well put to flight any prospective husband. In the autumn they go to Paris, London, Florence, Rome, Naples, or Lucerne. Our European hotels are filled with their exuberant gaiety and extraordinary whims. One meets them everywhere. They are indefatigable travellers, visiting everything, exploring everything, and everywhere they are as free as they are at home, heedless of the wonder they arouse or the comments they excite.

"This is all very well," said Walpole, "but —how do they manage at home?" Nine times out of ten the Americans make quiet wives; as is seen when the English make of them countesses, marchionesses, or duchesses, bearing with dignity the greatest names of the United Kingdom. From the fact that the American manner is directly opposed to our French ideas, and would expose our women to certain interpretations which, everything considered, would be less to our houour than to theirs; from the fact that the Americans turn aside from the conventional path which our young girls follow, a path in which our implacable logic mingles, whether one will or no, a whole category of human beings whatever their hopes, their natural taste and instincts—notwithstanding all this, it does not necessarily follow

that the Americans are absolutely in the wrong, or that we are absolutely in the right. The results of the American system are the true criterion, and in judging it by the results we cannot affirm that the great liberty given American girls, at the present time, has had any more deplorable results than has the European system.

The Italians say: "Our parents married us as they wished; it rests with us now to act as we please." The American marries as she wishes; free in her choice, she is in most cases true to it, and great are the joy and honour of her home. But that which above all shocks our conventional notions is the fact that she is "her own mother," that is to say, she assumes to take care of herself, to watch over herself, and to act with discretion. By her early contact with companions of her own age her imagination is curbed; there are no flights into a mysterious world. Hers are living types, and not impossible heroes. The deceitful mirages are replaced by a prosaic reality. Good sense takes the place of poetic illusions, and prudence of vague dreams and mystic flights. The art of *flirtation*, which is to love what the preface of a book is to the book itself, which is as the love of fencing is to the duel, accomplishes for her what her

public education began. She uses this art with the skill of her sex, with the confidence which the respect that she inspires gives her, with the wisdom of a precocious experience, and with the conviction that the happiness of her life depends on the use she makes of it and on her final choice. This choice is dictated by no one. She takes upon herself all the responsibility, having been prepared for it from girlhood. Accustomed to the flattery of men, their compliments do not turn her head. She takes a practical view of life; she knows what she may expect from it and what she wants. In these unruly and what are called empty brains there is more diplomacy than one suspects; a calmer heart and a cooler temperament than appearances might lead one to suppose. Moreover, on the other hand, the distinguishing characteristics of the Americans are seldom those which charm and attract us at first sight. Cold by temperament, reserved by instinct, indefatigable workers, ambitious for money and power, from an early age all their energy is concentrated on one idea alone—how to succeed. Their ambition is as limitless as the field in which they move. Not one of them, however humble she may be, but aspires to the highest rank and the greatest wealth.

Planter or woodcutter, workman or farmer, the American man may yet become a Representative, a Senator, an Ambassador, a Minister of State, or even the President of the Republic.

In the liberal professions nothing bars the way, or demands a long or expensive delay. There exist no indispensable conditions to advancement, no social categories in which one is inclosed and confined, and which paralyse his efforts and retard his progress. Equality of education gives his competitors no advantage over him, except such as may exist in the individual and intellectual ability of each. Superiority belongs less to knowledge than to energy and will. Each man knows this, and he puts all his powers to work, avoiding by instinct everything that hinders his progress, caring little for form and appearance, and much for the realities. He is reproached for his lack of suavity, for habits that are often rough, and for his scorn of conventionalities and rank. Of course there are many brilliant exceptions to this fact, but in the main the criticism is well founded.

The greater number of men have the time neither to acquire polish nor to seek the society of women. They have other things

to attend to. Then the absence of the *dot* has at least an advantage which they do not see in the rich marriage, a short cut toward wealth. Rich or poor as they are or are in the way of becoming, they are seldom idle. But leisure is necessary for the cultivation of woman's society. Of all occupations nothing is more absorbing than this, nothing takes more time and care. Then, again, in the United States the drawing rooms are not, as they are in Europe, one of the great roads to success, most frequented by the ambitious in quest of help, of recommendation, of influence. They are not a centre where intrigues are concocted and where one discusses affairs and makes bargains. Even in Washington the lobbyists who haunt the Capitol and the White House rarely have access to receptions, even to the political ones; and there would be difficulty in pointing out any statesman, financier, lawyer, or millionaire whatever at these receptions who had made his way in the world by society's favouritism.

Man's natural coldness and reserve, his many occupations and the energy which he gives to them, the respect which he has for the young girl, her experience of the realities of life, her imagination, curbed at an early age —all these are causes which make flirtation

less dangerous for the woman in the United States than anywhere else. If the daughters of Eve did not invent flirting itself, at least they coined the word, and raised the art to such perfection that it has reached the dignity of an institution. The art was necessary, to take the place of a system which existed in Europe, though never in America —the restless anxiety of parents and friends, their matchmaking, their discreet arrangements; in fact, all the strategy necessary to bring together a man and a woman and plan and arrange their marriage for them.

American independence could not submit to this. The absence of the *dot* removed the chief element in the affair, and left only a question of personal taste. Moreover, the hearts of the lovers alone being at stake, intercessors became useless, and the simplest thing was to leave the young people to their own devices. And this was what was done; so it fell to the young girl to form her own court about her, to make her own choice, to do what seemed best for her, and to admit to the number of her suitors only those who seemed to her to combine the traits which she desired in a husband. It was for her to assure herself by the necessary inquiries of the harmony of their tastes and ideas; to distinguish between mere flattery (the same in

everyone) and the depth and sincerity of the feeling she inspired, the intellectual and moral worth of the man whose name she was to take.

Flirting takes care of and allows all this. Under a melancholy or playful manner vows and confidences are exchanged; serious and tender conversations take place which show the character and wishes and hopes of each. Skilful tactician, the young girl excels in calming her impatience, in encouraging attention without binding herself, and in discouraging it without breaking off the friendship. Is she worldly? It is necessary for her to know whether he loves the world, or whether he will love it; whether he will take her into it; whether she can "entertain" and spend her summers at Saratoga, or at the seashore. Between two sentimental phrases, embellished with a quotation from Tennyson or Longfellow, she slips in a question as to the actual position of the young man, his business chances, his ambitions; she asks it like a sister, or like a friend who is interested in him and in his future. After some meetings she knows all that she need know, and as means of comparison are not wanting to her, she realises whether or not she should encourage him. Simple in her tastes, does she hope for a

calmer happiness? Does she hold her ideal to consist in the perfect intimacy of heart and mind? Will he like those whom she likes, and content himself with a quiet life? Or, again, has she ambition to play a political rôle, to shine at Washington? Are there in him the elements of a statesman, or at least of a politician? Will he know how to steer his bark over the stormy sea of politics? Imbued with old traditions, will her pride marry her into one of those historic families whose ancient origin is even more prized in the United States than in Europe? She may be trusted to make her choice with all the care, the prudence, and the wise deliberation that are necessary.

It is not for her to accommodate herself to the situation in which she is placed by circumstances, or to limit her tastes or bend her wishes to it. Neither her mode of life nor her education has prepared her for this. She is not like those German princesses whom a wisely colourless education makes Catholics or Protestants, orthodox or heterodox, English or Russian, Italian or Greek, according to the husband given to them by the political intrigues of the moment. Her ideas and tastes are formed; and the problem to be solved is the choice of a husband who, by sharing these tastes and ideas

with her, will best realise them. She spends her winter entertaining, her summer at Newport, Saratoga, Long Branch, without cessation or intermission, following up her ambitions with as much persistence as her husband uses to win success. By different means, the only ones within her reach, does she not aim at the same results? With this difference, however: that if the man makes a mistake, he can start again. If one business does not fulfil his expectations, there are open to him banking, politics, farming, and manufacturing with many years before him. But with her the case is different: one mistake affects her whole life, and her time is carefully measured out. With what marvellous art, with what consummate skill, she manœuvres on difficult ground, and guides her adorers with a careless and smiling manner, carrying on a bantering conversation in which she excels, and seizing in the effusion of a carefully arranged *tête-à-tête* some characteristic or other significant detail which enlightens her. Under this frivolous exterior which strikes the eye alone, she is playing an important part.

Great presence of mind and coolness are necessary to her. Her heart may be caught, and foresight may be found of no avail. As natural weapons she has her woman's in-

stinct, her intellectual superiority, a precocious knowledge of men, who cannot easily dissimulate, whom jealousy pricks, whom vanity blinds, and who when drawn on by passion are disconcerted by woman's shrewd retreats and skilful advances. In this perilous game does not woman risk compromising or losing her dignity, or at least forgetting something which in our eyes is the greatest charm of a young girl, namely, the candour, modesty, and innocence which we prize so much, and willingly attribute to her? This may be so; but given the necessity for her to make her choice and the great risk which she runs of being deceived, is it not permissible, all things considered, that she make good use of her advantages and of the weapons which nature has given her? The privilege of flirting is as sacred and as irrevocable in the United States as the immortal principles of 1789 are with us French. So if it be not actually an article of the American Constitution, it is, nevertheless, thought to be a part of the general Declaration of Rights, and, according to woman, that which authorises every citizen of the great Republic to do his best in the pursuit of happiness. Flirting being one of the means of attaining the latter, the temporary intimacy which it

gives to young men and women is accepted and respected. They can at their ease play the preliminary comedy of love, a sort of rehearsal before the representation itself—the prelude under a sentimental or jesting guise to the fitful fascinations which increase or vanish according as the accord or discord of the characters reveals itself in this half intimacy, which seeks a corner away from the crowded drawing-room or in summer time the beach.

Ingenious persons at Newport, Atlantic City, Bar Harbor, and Long Branch have made a profitable speculation from this national custom. They rent out to the young couple in search of a *tête-à-tête* a huge parasol, whose iron tip is buried in the sand. This parasol is a kindly shelter from the rays of the sun, as well as a protection against all passers-by. Ordinarily from under this vast mushroom only two little feet are visible, neatly clad, and two larger ones; sometimes, too, but rarely, is seen a slender waist encircled by a manly arm. Encouraged by his success, the Atlantic City speculator has had a long strip of sand levelled off on the bluff over the shore, and here the lovers may see, without being seen, the panorama of the sea unfolding itself at their feet. Those who are especially given

to flirting may spend here their long afternoons. No one is astonished or offended. Flirting is not the exclusive right of the rich—far from it. From the highest to the lowest round of the social ladder it is the indispensable prelude to marriage, and the girl who married without it would consider herself deprived of her rights. Does this mean that the thing is not abused, and that the temporary intimacy between young people, the most dangerous of all experiments, when they may indulge in coquetry, and tender avowals, and passionate declarations, does not at times end in disastrous consequences? The abuse does exist, but its consequences are rare, inasmuch as American laws and customs do not trifle in dealing with the subject of seduction.

In the United States no one has any sympathy for Don Juans. Any thought of wrong loses its charm where the fathers and brothers of the young girl stand ready armed, and where the courts are ever ready to impose a crushing penalty. One hesitates to venture upon a ground that is strewn with traps. The greatest danger is not for the girl, but for the man. His instinctive respect for women, and the natural deference paid to her weakness and attractions, protect her, and shelter her even from the flights of

her imagination and vanity. She knows this fact and often takes advantage of it. Her wild coquetry sometimes mocks at the sentiments she inspires, the affection which she incites, and the vows she whispers. She breaks them when they weary her—binds or unbinds them according to her fancy or ambition without a thought of any harm she may be causing. Moralists sigh over this, but neither the wisest counsels nor the entreaties of her father affect her. The necessity itself is there, and urges her for her own good to use the privileges of her sex with the greatest discretion.

"What are the limits of flirtation?" queries one of the most esteemed organs of public opinion; and the perplexed editor answers: "We well know where it begins, but no one can say where it ends. Young girls go too far. Their clever coquetry, if they are to be believed, is only the innocent manifestation of an ingenuous nature. Is it being a coquette, they ask, if we laugh and are merry, if we are dreamy and tender, and if bubbling vivacity or poetic melancholy is seen in our faces and makes us beautiful? Ought we to call this a crime? It is an ingenious argument, a plausible explanation, but, nevertheless, their sentiments are affected, and their gaiety unnatural. Here

is a charming young girl, of good education and family. She has everything to make her attractive, and suitors flock about her. In the number one worthy of her may be found, but is it for the purpose of discovering him that she puts forth her efforts? No, she is a disputed prize: her nervous laughter, her feverish gaiety, or her proud melancholy attract and fascinate a crowd of adorers, whom their less fortunate rivals envy. Not one of her gestures, not a word, but is calculated to produce an effect. Busied in winning approbation, in satisfying her insatiable vanity, in increasing her prestige, in hearing her name noised abroad and quoted in the papers, she puts aside the highest hope of woman, that of loving and being loved."*

An indulgent critic, the press is an accomplice in the custom which it condemns, for the indiscreet newspaper man is eager to praise the charms, to describe the toilets, and to give the names of the belles in the South, North, East, and West. In a single article we once read a list of young girls whose beauty was noted on the banks of the Potomac,—young girls of the best and most aristocratic society,—and in the list, which the author promised at a later date to com-

*New York *Herald*, January, 1889.

plete, were no less than 103 well-known names, each with explanatory remarks!

"Nellie Hazeltine of St. Louis," says the writer, "has just died at the age of twenty-four, and such was her reputation for beauty that each morning telegraphic bulletins gave an account of her condition, throughout all the cities of the Union, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. She was called the belle of New York, Newport, and Missouri. She was not more celebrated for her personal atractions than for her exquisite taste in dress."

Is it from a Persian poet or an American newspaper that we have the following portrait of Miss Mary Brown of Tennessee?—"Her pure features and perfect form would make a sculptor rejoice, and fill a painter's soul with enthusiasm. Her complexion reminds one of fleeting clouds and of the mother-of-pearl whiteness of the apple-blossom. In her eyes is reflected the blue of a summer sky, and the sun itself seems to have dropped one of its golden rays over her exquisite locks."

"Miss Mary Handie," another says, "is the belle of New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Her features are ravishing; her figure combines all the attractions which the inspired poets of the East gave to the houris and their enchanted paradise."

Surely in such paragraphs, drawn from some thousands, there is enough to turn a young girl's head, and to make her forgive a newspaper man for his criticisms and opinions, which are dictated by a kindly interest, and for which, moreover, there is no help. Public opinion excuses him, even if his friends condemn him.

She is a coquette, a flirt, unstable and fickle, capricious, and formidable; she abuses her rights and privileges, but the rights and privileges, nevertheless, are hers. If man imitates her, if he pretends, as she does, to make light of his engagements, to break ties made without thought, and, even though engaged, refuses to marry, public opinion brands him, the law condemns him. The woman can claim damages, which the court grants and which are rated not according to the extent of the harm done, which often is nothing, but according to the man's means.

As civilisation extends throughout the United States the customs change. Thirty years ago these private tragedies used to have a bloody ending. The "Arkansas toothpick," as the bowie knife was called, and the revolver, from an early date have brought the reluctant suitor to repentance, and avenged an injury done to the family

of a disconsolate Ariadne. To-day different measures are employed. Breach of promise cases, lawsuits for an unfulfilled engagement, have fortunately taken the place of the earlier methods, but in changing the system woman loses nothing. The fear of exorbitant fines has more influence with some men than has a well-equipped arsenal, and a large amount of damages is a better consolation to some women's vanity than an unproductive hecatomb.

## III.

Some of these breach of promise suits in the United States are famous, and, far from diminishing, the number increases every year. Speculation is mixed up with them, as is everywhere the case where money is concerned. Lawyers are educated in this speciality, and their practice, nursed by keen business men who are always on the watch for cases of this kind, brings them in great sums. A new style of eloquence has made its appearance in the court room, and as the verdict is based upon the sympathies of the jury, the plea is of an entirely different kind from that for which we should look in a matter discussed by every claptrap orator. Comedy and pathos unite in it.

Charles Dickens in his *Pickwick Papers* has left an immortal parody of this kind of proceeding in England. The following case, which occurred in the United States, and which may be compared with Dickens' masterpiece, contrasts the English humour with the practical American wit. Let us come into the court where the suit is going on.

"Gentlemen of the jury: The testimony which I have produced is before you. Its evidence is so clear and so precise as to leave no doubt in the minds of men conversant as you are yourselves with masculine deceit. My client has opened her heart to you. You have read its doubts, its modest hesitations. In the touching recital, which I have no wish to repeat for fear of weakening its effect, she confided to you—to you who are sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands—with what infernal art, with what dastardly promises of intoxicating joys, of new toilets and home comforts, the defendant, here present, snatched from her the tender avowal for which he sighed—this avowal which cost the modesty of her sex so much, this avowal which—here, you know as much as I, and propriety closes my lips. Master of her secret as he is of her heart, he culls from those maiden lips the kisses whose sweetness her mother alone till now had tasted—

these kisses—you know the rest. With what satanic eagerness he returns even that very night, the next day, the following days! Betrothed, he rejoices in the delicious privilege of holding her slender, yielding form within his arms. Her head upon his shoulder, her heart beating against his, she tells him of her innocent girlhood, of her heart's dreams—in fact, all that follows in such a case. And he? Yes, he listens, he holds her close to him with sweet words, with promises and vows, until the day when some business—I do not know exactly what—calls him, he says, to St. Louis. He leaves her, vowing that he will return, that he will write often—and he never writes. She becomes restless, she writes him letter after letter, and in return for her tender notes he maintains a scornful silence. When he breaks it, it is to announce that their marriage is impossible, and he brutally offers her—at this point, gentlemen of the jury, I can scarcely contain my indignation—he offers her—I believe I see a figure trembling on your lips, that which your just verdict will give to my client—he offers her one thousand dollars damages!"

"In cash," interrupted the lawyer of the defendant.

"Yes, in cash,—I understand that well

enough,—but it is only a thousand dollars—and what shall we get after our lawyer is paid?"

Then, with a movement of rising indignation: "A thousand dollars? No, gentlemen of the jury, this cannot be! A thousand dollars for our broken heart, for our faith in man forever lost, for our life vowed to eternal singleness! We are not of those who promise irrevocable vows a second time, who give to another the lips that love has kissed, who console ourselves for a lost love by asking from another the happiness which was once ours. And for so many tears shed, for such dire and bitter deception, one thousand dollars is offered us! Say fifteen hundred and we will close with it."

The accused and his counsel consult together. Then they make a sign of assent and the suit is withdrawn.

One does not always get off so fortunately, as a certain Southern senator discovered to his cost. A widow entered an action against him for refusing to marry her, alleging that on the 9th of November, 1885, the gallant senator had offered her marriage. Up to June, 1886, she said, he wrote her frequently and in the tenderest manner, reiterating his offer, begging her to accept

him and to fix a day for the wedding. She suggested several dates to him, one after another, it appears, but for some reason or other he passed them over, always offering some excuse. In 1886 the loving senator, notwithstanding his engagement, sought the hand of another lady. Refused in this quarter, he asked and obtained that of a third, and was to marry her on the 2d of November, 1887.

The plaintiff declared under oath that during the two previous years she was ready at any time to marry him, having at several times mentioned a day and an hour, as her letters showed. In view of her marriage, which she had every reason to suppose would take place immediately, she spent more than she ought. She gave orders to her seamstress and her dressmaker which were promptly filled, with the result that she found herself provided with toilets for which she had no use. Besides this loss of money, which the senator declared himself ready to make good, there was the mortification which she felt, the jests of which she was the object, and the loss of her social position, the value of all which she set at the round sum of $50,000 (250,000 francs). This sum she had every chance of gaining, since the impru-

dent senator had committed himself deeply in writing.

All these proceedings resemble one another, and, as is natural, letters play an important part in them. In default of letters oral evidence is used, and one may ask, in seeing the proportionately anxious number of conscript fathers arraigned before the courts of justice as delinquent lovers, what it is that brings so much feminine malice upon their venerable heads.

Feminine office-seekers are no less formidable, and few come out of these affairs so fortunately as did another senator from the South from an episode which caused a great sensation in Washington in January, 1888. For several weeks this senator was followed by a widow whose bold scheming nothing daunted. In the lobbies of the Senate Chamber, at the entrance of the Capitol, in the street, and even to his hotel, she hunted him without mercy, balking every plan of escape. In vain, in response to the jokes of his companions, he declared that love had nothing to do with the affair, and that his persecutor was only seeking an office. Everyone predicted that it would result in a suit for refusal of marriage, which could be settled only out of his well-filled purse. One morning while in his

bathing dress, modestly covered with towelling, the senator was bathing, when the sound of light footsteps attracted his attention. Discreetly peering through the curtain which hid him from sight, he recognised the widow, who had eluded the hotel boys, and had succeeded in entering his private dressing-room. At this point we shall quote from the indiscreet newspaper:

"Good Heavens! madame, what *do* you want?"

"I want my office. You promised it to me, and I will not leave until I have it," taking a chair, and sitting down.

"But I can do nothing in this condition—and in this costume."

"Ah yes, you can; let us talk of the affair—in order that you may do something when you are elsewhere," she replied in a hard voice. "I will not stir from here."

What was he to do? To get out at any cost? It could not be thought of. She would scream, and her cries would arouse the hotel employes, who would come and surprise him. In a moment he might be compelled to marry her. Did he hesitate? She drew from her bag needles and thread, and settled down to knit exactly as though she were at home. Then indeed he began to

tremble. The position was not to be borne. "I surrender," he said meekly through a chink in the curtain. "For mercy's sake, let me finish dressing. Wait for me in the drawing-room; I swear to join you there and look after your position."

An hour later they went together to the Secretary of the Treasury, and obtained of him for the widow a position with a salary of seven hundred dollars a year, beginning the following day.

"Sam Weller," said the shrewd Tony Weller to his son, "Sam Weller, beware of widows?" And a large number of European travellers imitate Tony Weller, and ask those who come after them to beware of young American girls, shrewd, sentimental, calculating, and experienced little fools who are the exception, and not the rule. In the United States, as elsewhere, experience is dearly bought. It is dearer there than elsewhere, and certain adventures, apparently not without attractions at the beginning, become very serious. An American millionaire of Chicago in travelling to Detroit met a young and charming young girl on the train. They were alone. He began a conversation, and his idol ended in a couple of hours by exacting from him a promise to marry her or to pay her twenty

thousand dollars.* He paid it, but the lesson was a hard one for him. Hard also was that of the poor devil recently condemned by the court to deduct every month as long as he lived a certain sum from his moderate salary to pay for a momentary act of gallantry at a public ball. Between these two extreme rounds of the social ladder, between the millionaire and the workman, there is room for a certain number of victims in a country where a judge is bound by the plaintiff's testimony, in circumstances where a witness is rare, and would be troublesome, and in certain circles where no hypocritical reserve and no false or exaggerated modesty prevent the woman's making the most of her "weakness."

This weakness is exceptional, for Circes are rarer than in Europe, and if their number is increasing, if for twenty years they have been assuming alarming proportions, it is because in the United States a rapid commercial and industrial change has increased the wealth of the rich and the poverty of the poor, and made a sort of intermediate class which struggles against a social grouping in which they feel their position to be below

* *Eight Months in America*, by Duvergier de Hauranne, i. p. 431.

their worth. We shall return to this point, but in the normal and regular life which we are analysing, in the classes which compose American society, breach of promise suits are rare. The men are careful and the girls are not adventuresses, but under their frivolous or serious exteriors are really sedate and sensible people, who know what they wish and what they are about, who are sometimes a little intoxicated by their youth, their beauty, and their success, and who are perhaps a little foolish, too, but have, like *Hamlet*, "a method in their madness." Practicality asserts itself and the touch of folly or of eccentricity disappears when they are older. Nothing is more regularly arranged or better calculated with a view to the desired result than their social trilogy. The life of a young society girl in New York or in any other large city of the East comprises three distinct seasons, each representing a winter with the dissipations of a city, and a summer with its so-called country amusements.

*First year.*—The girl makes her *début* in society. She has heard it talked of and for a long time the date has been settled. However, too much concerned with the importance of her *début*, she is somewhat awkward and embarrassed. In this new

field she is at a loss. Her mother, fearing for her a too free behaviour and the suspicion of "bad form," has carefully left out the friends and companions of her childhood. Their gaiety and their familiarity would scandalise serious people but little accustomed to so noisy a gathering. This is the preliminary year. The girl observes, listens, and holds her peace. Out of courtesy men are presented to her; by choice they ignore her. Out of her element, isolated, unconscious of her real value, she causes no sensation as yet. It is a tiresome season for her, this period of initiation. Seated by her mother's side, she rarely dances, and talks still less. She is always ready to return home at the least sign of weariness from her father. In the summer, at Newport or Saratoga, she finds some of the dancers and some of her drawing-room companions. Coteries are formed and girlish friendships are made. Walks, excursions, drives, are planned. People speak to her and she answers. They notice her and she sees it. She feels that she is somebody, and not something. She begins the art of serious flirtation, and her youthful experience only helps to facilitate her efforts.

*Second year.*—This is a year of experi-

ments. She knows people and they know her. She makes the most of what she knows and guesses at what she does not know. Daylight begins to dawn upon her mind. She knows intuitively what best suits her complexion and her style of beauty. From a chrysalis she emerges a butterfly. She has made her friends, and on this choice, wisely made, depends in a great measure the future of her matrimonial campaign. According to American customs, these young companions will be more useful to her than father, mother, brother, aunt, or cousin. Has she known well how to choose them? Their popularity will make hers. Their kindly remarks about her will bring her into notice. They will help her, as she will help them. Like her, even before her, they will have guessed what husband she must have. They plan to bring the two together, making opportunities for her to meet him by invitations skilfully suggested to their mothers. At formal dinners she finds him at her side. It is a case in which everything can be repaid. It is an exchange of good deeds, a society for mutual assistance. In the young girls' conversations with one another they are confidential and half admit their preferences. If the horizon widens, her choice

circumscribes it. She imagines herself in love, but she is not sure of it. Among her many admirers she thinks she can choose one, but still she hesitates.

*Third year.*—This is the decisive year—the climax. She is at the height of her beauty, and she realises it. She has had experience, and from it comes assurance. Her limpid gaze, full of an instructed innocence, rests on those about her with as much calmness as an artist who has finished his portrait for the next exhibition. She knows exactly what she wants, the establishment for which she is fitted, the kind of life she desires. She knows how to listen with an air of moved astonishment to a passionate declaration, and to refuse with tearful eyes the wooer who asks her to marry him, but who does not offer what her ambition seeks. His importunity checked, she can enjoy without remorse the peace of her maiden sleep. At length her choice is made. Her careful flirtation, her skilfully calculated advances tempered with modest hesitation, have elicited a declaration from the man in whom she finds united to the highest degree the qualities which she desires in a husband. In the spring she is married at Trinity Church with a brilliant procession of eight bridesmaids.

And the others?

What others?

Those who, more womanly, or womanly in a different way, do not possess the art, the *savoir faire*, of the society girl. Those, in short, whom no suitors have sought, or who believe in a pure love match, who will not be attracted by men whom they do not love, and so have refused all offers. These are the ones whom an American writer described in a series of public sketches a few years ago. These are "Bouncers," as Mr. Oliphant has named them, and the title clings to them. The majority of foreigners who visit the United States see and hear only these. They are the popular type of the young American girl, independent and scornful of public opinion which indulges her perversity and tolerates her eccentricities.

In Central Park and on Broadway, at the seashore and at the watering place, at the theatre and on ferryboats, they thrust themselves upon our notice, their loud gaiety attracting and holding the attention of all. On the Continent one meets them everywhere. In our great hotels in Paris and Nice, at the casinos of Florence, in Rome on the Pincio, at Naples, in Cairo and in Munich, in Dresden and in Lon-

don, everywhere at home, they are spoiled children whose whims astonish and whose free manners disconcert the public. In their hearts, in spite of their odd ways, they are very womanly women and very honest ones. Too independent to be bound by hypocritical customs of society or too sincere to play a rôle, they possess what their birth, education, and position have given them. While waiting for love and marriage, they amuse themselves with the carelessness of their age and the liberty which custom allows to their sex, until the day arrives when they make their choice and enter the rank of the matrons, to become in their turn quiet mothers.

Farewell to the noisy drives, the sleighing parties, to flirting, to *tête-à-têtes* on the sea-beach, to sentimental excursions! They have had everything that the life of the young girl could give, and in their new life they have no regrets for the past, no remembrance of having enjoyed too little. They marry for themselves, from choice and taste, and not for what they will have. Moreover, as most frequently is the case, they have no *dot*, and their family contents itself with providing a trousseau. Occasionally their father adds to a title deed, according to his means, a gift of some

hundreds or thousands of dollars to defray the expenses of a wedding trip to Europe. As to the hope of legacies, they count but little on them, as being naturally uncertain and remote. Except for a few large fortunes, securely invested, the majority of American estates are settled in the banking business, in commerce, in industry or speculation, and are liable to such fluctuations that they increase or decrease suddenly, and in calculating the value of a future legacy men run the risk of serious mistakes. Then, again, the head of a family is free to make his will as he pleases, and if he chooses he can favour one of his children, or wrong them all.

Also one must remember that in the United States, in the middle class, the majority of marriages are marriages for love, and that the interested motives which weigh upon one so heavily in Europe rarely have any consideration. Finally, single blessedness does not frighten women, who find ample compensation for the many responsibilities which every marriage brings with it in the liberty which they continue to enjoy by not marrying. If the young European girl wins the appearance of liberty by marrying, the young American girl gives up the reality which was hers;

the former enters for the first time into the world, the latter ordinarily gives it up. Other occupations, other cares, claim her; her life of pleasure is finished. A serious life has begun for her with all its duties and responsibilities.

## IV.

As the young girl's life is lived under the broad and glaring light of day, so when she is married silence falls upon her and about her. Save in exceptional cases, when public attention is called to them by their great fortunes, their brilliant receptions, their luxurious way of living, their toilets, or the high social position of their husbands, these young girls pass, without any period of transition, from the publicity of the drawing-room into the seclusion of married life. Like a brilliant meteor, they trace a shining path; darkness comes, and to the sanctuary of home, where the final evolution takes place, where the mirthful and rebellious coquette is converted into the wise matron, the serious and sober woman, only her parents and friends are admitted. The psychological study of the American woman is as complex as that of the young girl is simple. Outside of personal observation

the sources of information are at fault. Do not expect from Americans half-told confidences, fine but indiscreet remarks which expose their private life, and reveal its disappointments or its joys. They are silent. They have the Anglo-Saxon temperamental reserve.

Silent also is the novel, which stops at the threshold of the bridal chamber and ends when, after many catastrophes, the hero marries the heroine. If sometimes it is continued beyond this point, if, imitating our own novel, it undertakes to initiate us into the complicated married life, do not trust it. It is a guide but little to be relied upon, as, under feminine sway, it is adapted to paint woman not as she is, but as she would be; to preach a theory, and not to write a true history. Instinctively, American women study how not to betray a single one of their personal feelings, and how to avoid everything that, by truthful detail, would permit us to recognise the play of individuality or the characteristics and influence of any one of them.

Moreover, the American novel is seldom an exact picture of life, a real impression, but almost always a work of the imagination, written to please, distract, or convince; and when occasionally it strives to be true, its

effort is concentrated on comparisons and accessories. The real feelings, impressions, and sensations of the principal character, who himself holds the pen, are hidden under a discreet and voluntary silence. Then, too, memoirs are rare, as well as autobiographies. During the few past years, however, American publishers have touched upon this line of work, and some recent publications throw a new light over the social, intellectual, and moral life of a generation which is extinct. There are noble types and beautiful women revealed to us in the memoirs of James and Lucretia Mott, in the biography of Margaret Fuller Ossoli, by C. D. Warner, and in the letters of Maria Child. These lives, consecrated to useful work and worthily spent, bring out in bold relief that greatness of heart and mind which is the unquestionable gift and characteristic trait of a large number of women in the United States.

Finally, if American journalism does not carry prudery as far as English journalism did a few years ago; if it does not keep absolute silence on the danger which certain vices entail upon society; if, by the accounts given of divorce cases and of scandals, it raises the veil slightly and permits a glance into private life, it tells only what all the world knows, and the indiscretion is nothing

more than a revelation of the exception which proves the rule. This reserve explains why the numerous volumes published in the United States abound in details of the young American girl, painting her according to the sex, age, and disposition of the writer, under such varied and contradictory forms, and multiplying the number of facts and examples, of anecdotes and comments, while they are silent on the subject of the married woman. It would seem from our reading as if the latter did not exist. When she is mentioned, it is as the hospitable mistress of the house, at a ball or a dinner, as the indulgent mother where the coquetry of her daughters is concerned, or as the faithless wife whom scandal brings into the daylight of publicity.

There is, however, something else to be said of her, and her life does not merely fluctuate between the commonplace and quiet rôle and these noisy digressions. Her marriage, the great event of her life, depends on her, and her alone. If the man she chooses freely is, by fortunate circumstances, able to marry her at once, the wedding takes place without delay. From a room or two, after a short wedding trip, she takes possession of her home, hotel, cottage, or simple apartment. If, on the other hand, as is fre-

quently the case when personal inclination alone determines her choice, the position of her future husband is not yet assured, she binds herself by an engagement, and waits for the *dénouement* of her story during a long betrothal. It may be interminable. That of one of my friends, a naval officer, lasted seventeen years. Yet there was not one hour in which either he or she repented. They were constant in spite of years of separation, during his long voyages to Oceanica, Asia, and Europe, in spite of interrupted correspondence, remonstrances on the part of their parents, and in spite of social temptations. This was an exceptional case, but engagements of many years' standing are not rare, and they are an eloquent proof in favour of a choice made in earnest.

The absence of the wife's *dot* necessitates on the man's part a position of wealth which he does not always have at the age when he is ordinarily married. As often as a lawyer, physician, or merchant starts out in business he is obliged to calculate his expenses, to balance his accounts carefully. In New York and other large cities of the Union actual living is expensive, and if one makes much, one also spends much. Rent is dear; good servants cannot be found for moderate wages; starting out in business is costly.

One attains often to the most practical combination, to that which allows the young couple to calculate their expenses exactly, to depend on their income and avoid all debt. They take rooms at a hotel. There are all kinds of these for all purses, and all run with this purpose, in view of a special patronage. They find according to the price they can pay an apartment more or less complete, with a drawing room, sleeping-room, bath- and toilet-rooms, and with board and service at a stated sum, by the day or month.

For anyone who knows what American hotels are, with their sumptuous decorations, their rich reception-rooms, smoking-rooms, reading-rooms, ladies' parlours, spacious halls, vast staircases, soft carpets, immense corridors brilliantly lighted, their dining-rooms and the elegance of their table linen and crystal, it is not to be expected that for a moderately small sum one can have the results of an unlimited income and the comfort of a millionaire without being one—the elegance and refinement which wealth alone gives. It is not strange that vulgar surroundings are distasteful to us, that they disconcert our ideas of private life and of real happiness; but it is necessary to take into account other

things and unquestionable compensations. We can scarcely imagine a young woman in such a place, but in such a place she is and she is queen in it. She is surrounded with attention and kindness. Some are removed far from home, but custom has made this familiar. On a steamer which plies on one of the large rivers in the United States I met one day a couple who had been married that very morning, and were starting on their wedding trip. The captain gallantly offered the bride his arm, and led her to the bridal room, the special cabin kept for bride and groom, decorated with floral allegories. At the table, seated on his right, he paid her the compliments due to her changed position. The passengers drank to the health of the bride, and all the disconcerting attention which would have frightened a young woman in Europe, seemed very simple and natural to the American. She meets it again at the hotel, where her new dignity attracts the respectful attention of everyone. She lives better and at less expense. For the same price in a cheap flat she would have from the start to train one servant for good or ill, an incapable German or a stubborn Irish girl. She would have to order the meals, the preparation of which she ought to oversee, or she must prepare

them herself; she must be on her guard against the tradespeople, must foresee, calculate, master the art of housekeeping, which has as little in common with the demands of her new position as with those of her husband, who wishes to find her upon his return well dressed, elegant, and calm, devoted to him, and with a mind free from vulgar care and confusion. The hotel gives her all this. In its comfortable shelter she lives at her ease, free from material occupation and heavy work.

While her husband is away, she has no other occupation beyond her toilet, her intellectual pursuits, and visits to receive and make. In the hotel are a number of young women in a like position with whom she can become acquainted, go out, and chat. For her, as for her husband, it is only a camping out, a temporary home, while waiting for the permanent one. But temporary as it is, it may continue beyond their expectations; and if this mode of existence has advantages, it has also dangers. More than one scandal which the press has echoed has had its birth here. Idleness is an evil counsellor, and in simplifying one's duties one often comes to exaggerate his rights and to abuse them. The great liberty which the Americans enjoy is not

without its perils, and the difference between the young girl's flirting and the young woman's natural desire to please is not learned in a single day. Between her husband, who, absorbed in business, is away all day, and the absence of duties which fill up the long empty hours, there is only room for her own occupations, or for the distractions which present themselves. She receives whoever seems good to her and she goes wherever she wishes. Her more guarded coquetry is also more dangerous, and to some frivolous and fickle women coquetry is second nature. They form a court about them, as they did when unmarried, and to this perilous game more than one succumbs; the respect of others no longer defends her against her own weakness. These dangers are much more frequent in the boarding houses, which are so numerous in New York. Here young couples of more limited resources can live cheaper than in a hotel. They rent a room and take their meals there, meeting other guests in the general drawing-room. Mr. Claudio-Jannet, who does not respect these much bepraised customs of the Americans, points out in his remarkable work on the United States of to-day the serious inconveniences of this mode of living: "Ten, twelve, fifteen families live under the

same roof, all brought together by chance. There is no need of laying stress on the evils which arise in such a promiscuous gathering. For families to submit to it they must already, necessarily, have lost all sense of the proprieties of married life, and of the duties of paternity."

The principal reason for this kind of living is found, first, in the expense of living in large cities and the impossibility of procuring at a reasonable price servants who know their duties. Then there is the idea of luxury, which is unquestionably associated with that of respectability. By a strange contrast this craving for luxury is as innate in the American woman, whose mind is taken up with appearances, as it is absent from the man, who is indifferent to appearances, and thinking only of realities. He loves money and devotes all his physical and mental energies to acquiring it, because money is the tangible and visible stamp of success. For himself, however, he uses but little and asks for but little of it. It is the wife who is his luxury, as she is his instrument for spending money; and, millionaire though he be, or may become, his life is one of incessant labour and of overwhelming cares. On the other hand, one can with difficulty imagine the great display which the wife of

the wealthy banker or well-known merchant makes in her palace on Fifth Avenue, while from his simple manner, and often neglected appearance, the husband might be taken at first sight for a merchant in less than moderate circumstances.

It is here in the "upper ten" (a term which has almost lost its value in the United States since the day when an annual revenue of ten thousand dollars was considered a fortune) that one must look for the American woman in her true surroundings. These she owes, in most cases, to her beauty, to her art in charming and attracting people, to that faculty of discernment which made her choose a man capable of gaining the high position to which she aspired. They have, each of them, their separate spheres. She has the *éclat* of wealth, worldly prominence, haughty exclusiveness. He has the power which millions give—a power stronger and more lasting than that with which the Chief Magistrate of the state is invested, who is restricted by his modest salary of fifty thousand dollars, by his limited power, and by his tenure of office, which expires at the end of four years.

"When one of these railroad kings rode from New York to the shores of the Pacific in his palace car," writes Mr. Bryce, "his

trip was a triumphal excursion. The Governors of the States and of the Territories hurried to meet him and to pay him homage. The legislative assemblies gave solemn receptions in his honour. The cities rivalled one another in sparing no expense in receiving him in order to gain his good will. Unpopular as are these powerful companies which from one end of the Republic to the other work out their despotic will, those who are connected with them receive no lesser tribute of deference and admiration than every American gives to whosoever personifies a great work."

Heads are necessary to every social organisation. Thoroughly democratic as is this race, it has its aristocrats, found in the Southern States among the ancient families of English or of French extraction, and in the North among the descendants of those who have won the first rank in society by the force of their will, by indomitable effort, and by success. The old aristocratic traditions still exist in Boston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and instead of growing less are increasing. The coats of arms prove this, and the carefully recorded genealogies. The Biddles have traced theirs back beyond the Norman invasion; the Whartons to 1545; the Chapmans count Sir Walter

Raleigh among their ancestors; the Cadwaladers date theirs from Robert II. of Scotland; the Novins from 1573; the Montgomerys are descended from the Earls of Eglinton. Mr. Charles Browning, in his book entitled *Americans of Royal Descent*, cites as many as twenty families among whose ancestors are found Edward I., Henry IV., and Edward III., of England, James I. of Scotland, and Philip III. of France. In New York, where a moneyed aristocracy predominates, it is not the founders of great fortunes who hold the highest rank, but their sons and their grandsons. The founders themselves have other things to do. It is necessary to devote time to acquiring wealth; and every social ambition is excluded by their mighty task. An intelligent and refined woman alone can make one forget the origin of her millions by veiling with grace and beauty an humble origin and the vulgar toil of the founder of her family. Women have accomplished this in the case of the Astors, of the Vanderbilts, of the Lorillards, and of many others whose wealth is socially ennobled because of the use they have made of it. These millionaires possess the revenues of kings without any of the kings' responsibilities, and it is easy to understand what their descend-

ants can accomplish with so powerful an instrument in their hands. The fancy-dress ball which Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt gave on the 26th of March, 1883, in order to open her palatial residence on Fifth Avenue for whose decoration six hundred workmen and sixty sculptors, brought from Europe, had been employed for eighteen months, surpassed in its lavish display of diamonds and in richness of toilets the most sumptuous affair ever seen at European courts. They talk still in New York of the marvellous apparition of the hostess dressed as a Venetian princess, and of the dazzling court costume worn by Lady Mandeville and copied after a portrait by Van Dyck.

The natural tendency of all aristocracy that has as its foundation birth, public services, or the possession of wealth is to maintain and defend its rights by forming a distinct and exclusive circle. The wealthy families of New York, the old families of Boston and of Philadelphia, and the aristocratic descendants of the Southern settlers preserve the same exclusiveness. Their doors, hospitably open to strangers whose reputation is good, are closed to parvenus who beg admission. They keep aloof even among themselves and among those of equal rank; and these invisible barriers of a democratic

etiquette recall in certain instances those of our ancient courts. Nothing less than the *éclat* of the Vanderbilt ball is necessary to celebrate their entrance into the high life of New York, and nothing less than the tact and the *savoir faire* of Lady Mandeville to bring Mrs. Astor, the leader of New York society, to visit Mrs. William H. Vanderbilt, which gave the latter the right of asking to her ball a family which until then had affected ignorance of her very existence. This social incident assumed at the time the proportions of a great event. It served as the subject of conversation in clubs and drawing rooms, and the press was not sparing in entertaining its readers with the details of the meeting. In this wealthy and exclusive world the rôle of woman alone is visible. It is about her that the elegance of luxury and the splendour of social life centre. Writers and reporters stand at a distance, on the watch for her every movement. Her toilets and her trips to the country, her receptions and her journeys, are duly chronicled, with full comments. The complicated mechanism of this life is a strange contrast to its environment and to democratic institutions.

Secretary, and reader, and young lady companions perform the functions of maids

of honour; a world of lackeys and of maids, directed as in England by a butler and a housekeeper; in travelling, a palace-car, which they leave at the station where they stop, and the luxurious management of which is left to special valets and couriers; carriages sent in advance to designated places; menus telegraphed to the large hotels—a whole extraordinarily sumptuous system burdensome and monotonous, in which nothing is left to fancy or caprice. It is the tangible evidence of a moneyed aristocracy, in which every customary object is stamped with a special mark, as is every act of life.

## V.

Between these millionaires, powerless to spend their income, but often powerless to enjoy it, and the petty tradesman just beginning, the lawyer and the physician in quest of practice, the broker and the employé, who demand the vulgar luxury of a hotel, or at least the doubtful comfort of a boarding house (which gives that appearance of respectability which the American woman claims), vibrates a middle class in moderately easy circumstances, corresponding to our *bourgeoisie*, though it has neither the strict economy nor the moderate desires of the

latter. One finds in the male American of this class ambitious aims, the cold energy of a race of hardy pioneers let loose on a limitless continent; and in his wife these ambitions are translated into social aspirations which are often beyond her means, but which her confidence in her real worth justifies in her eyes. Her elegance demands a setting, just as her beauty demands a toilet. Wealth is a necessity, and the daily gain of her husband is for both nothing but the stepping-stone to a brilliant future.

They spend what they make, sure of themselves and of the future, carried on by the stream of prosperity, which in less than a single century has made the great Republic the richest country in the world. They have inherited the nomadic tastes of their ancestors. Nothing binds them to one place more than to another. The best place is that which gives them the greatest opportunities of attaining their end, and this is one where the population increases most rapidly. Chicago or San Francisco, St. Louis or New Orleans, the West or the South, the new Territories or the old States—wherever they establish themselves they will find, he a wide field of activity and the same conditions of living; she, the same consideration, the same attention. Wherever they

go, her pre-eminence will follow them. In travelling, in the hotels, on the railroads, on the boats, her husband is nothing more to her than a protector. It is she, on the other hand, whose presence gives him every privilege and advantage. It is because he is with her that he has a right to the best seats and the best staterooms, that he is admitted into the "ladies' parlour," that he sits as the head of the *table d'hôte* and is served among the first. In order to avoid the distressing promiscuity that one meets with, and the lack of attention which in America is the lot of bachelors, someone has humourously suggested that the tourist should travel with his cook. He would then be escorting a woman, and would profit by all the advantages of the position.

In every detail of social life these privileges of woman appear. The sovereignty of all heightens the prestige of the individual. Once married, this prestige is hers, and in order to assert itself in a narrower circle her influence gains in strength all that it loses in breadth. She is the secret motive power, the counsellor who is heeded. She excites ambition and, impatient for success, often discounts the future and deserves the criticism of spending far too lavishly, and of not taking precautions against losses,

sickness, or ill luck. In the middle class especially this criticism is just, and it is with reason that some American women are accused of bringing ruin on their families. They approach too closely to the world of the rich, and often fall into the temptation of imitating it. It is particularly so in the refined and civilised Eastern States. The West, more healthful morally, and physically more vigorous, has become by circumstances the reserve force of the future, the place where the primitive type grows and acquires renewed strength. Chamfort said, "Original types are indeed necessary to make a world." There enters, in fact, into the social organisation of a great people a multitude of different elements. In analysing them separately we run the risk of reaching illogical conclusions, because involuntarily our attention is more forcibly drawn to those which differ from a general law than to those which observe it. Intellectually we are more affected by that which offends our ideas than by that which conforms to them, just as in the same way physically our ears are more offended by a false note than satisfied by a correct one.

Again, the majority of foreign observers are above all impressed by what seems to them a striking contrast between our own

idea of woman's rôle and the American idea. In the attention which she receives across the Atlantic some see only a *banal* courtesy, concealing a depth of moral indifference and of physical coldness inherent in the race. Others discover in it a devotion which no real superiority justifies. All have noticed the perversity of the idol, her coquetry, her love of luxury, her too free manner, her too noisy gaiety, her doubtful taste, her superficial knowledge, and all these facts astonish them. There is truth in all this; but there are more and better things in the American woman.

Coquetry is inborn in the American, but it does not exclude deep and serious feelings. This coquetry is only the legitimate outcome of a natural instinct, which puts her at the right moment on natural ground in order to attain a natural result. The love of luxury, inherent in almost everyone, is the logical result, though exaggerated, of an irresistible stream of prosperity which draws the whole country along with it. One cannot ask them to go back. Their intrepid optimism, their faith in the future, disconcert our European pessimism, but are justified by their past. Their manner, though too free, is the result of hereditary independence, and of the respect which sur-

rounds them. They use it, and perhaps abuse it, but only for a time, and these giddy girls, all things considered, make most reasonable women.

The exuberance of their gaiety does no harm to the seriousness of their mind, and their intellects, if they do not excel, are at least equal to those of European women. Does this mean that they are perfect, that the young American girl and woman realise an ideal unknown elsewhere? No, surely not. They are different, and for the very reasons we have shown. The starting point, the surroundings, the customs, the usages and laws, have contributed in their respective ways to mould and make them what they are. To what extent have these various elements raised or lowered the moral standard of the young Republic during the past century? What are the results of this idea of woman's rôle so different from ours?

These are the questions which the American woman asks at the present day, disconcerted by widely heralded lawsuits, by scandals, by the misunderstandings and the contradictions of the laws of marriage and divorce, and by the growing number of social outcasts. A well-put question is half answered. The Americans treat this, deli-

cate as it is, with an intrepid frankuess. It is a question worthy of thought, and perhaps it will be useful to note the conclusions at which they arrive, and the solutions which they propose.

## CHAPTER III.

Marriage and Divorce in the United States—Extreme Laxity of the Laws—Typical Cases—Legislation of the Different States—Adventuresses—Woman in the Far West—Story of Belle Starr.

### I.

It seems as though at certain times in their history civilised nations, the advance guards of humanity on the march toward an unknown future, hesitate, come to a standstill, and begin to question one another. In the half light through which they are journeying one ray has disappeared; a great intellect has been cut down by death; the torch gives only a flickering light; some religious belief that has been transmitted from father to son, some social institution that has been hallowed by centuries—men would begin to doubt these if he knew by what they could be replaced. Are men deceived, then? Yes, and for the same cause that in a narrow road a broken axletree can delay the march of an army; for the same cause that when one of the wheels of the social machine grates and stops, it is

necessary to repair it to the best of one's ability. These accidents occur frequently, and there is no lack of signals to give notice of them nor of special workmen to find a remedy. The press gives the alarm. Thinkers and philosophers comment and suggest, assemblies discuss and make light of it, and the cumbrous machine being righted for better for worse, goes on its way until another stop occurs.

Sometimes it is only a false alarm ; a cry of some few who are impatient and disconcerted by unexpected occurrences, and who, from the fact that a force which has changed its direction works badly in their case, conclude from this that it will act the same in the case of others. So they take an accidental phenomenon, and, as the result of chance circumstances, they infer from it a universal disorder. Thus it happens that with every nation, in every age, and especially when the difficulty of communication and of interchange of ideas increases tenfold the distance which separates them, the horizon of each is limited and narrow.

Man has an invincible tendency toward generalisation. He scorns the belief that there is abundance elsewhere when famine has him by the throat ; he scorns the peace and prosperity which are beyond his own

frontiers when within them rages destructive war; he will not admit that his personal ruin is not felt a few feet away, that the adversity which holds him fast is spared his neighbour, or that others suffer while everything goes well with him. The same doubt comes to him on the subject of social institutions, in one place favoured and in another injured by political, moral, or religious change, on account of the tendencies of the age, the customs, or the laws, which are changeable, while the institutions are unchanged. But amazement grows, and confusion increases, when, after having built a costly and complicated machine, and having wisely planned a social organisation, he is obliged to recognise the well-known fact that the result obtained is diametrically opposed to what was looked for, and that a false turn involving a retrograde movement retards instead of advancing it. This is the feeling which is at present agitating the United States with regard to the institution of marriage, the foundation of modern society.

Determined, before all else, to establish marriage on the highest religious and moral authority that the world has ever known, American legislators believed it necessary to admit that the imperfections of human

nature do not admit of absolute laws, or unbreakable ties. Divorce seemed to be only a necessary resort in exceptional cases carefully foreseen and minutely determined upon; but this provision once admitted has become, if not a rule, at least an exception which is growing. To-day the evil cannot be denied. It is increasing, and manifests itself the more strongly inasmuch as it has been slow in coming. Every year the number of divorce cases increases. In the past twenty years the courts have granted 328,-716. The demand for them grows; and the press, in bringing these facts before the public, points out at the same time the dangers of defective legislation, and the reforms which might be made in it. It expresses wonder, and not without reason, on seeing the institution of marriage imperilled in the cases where more than anywhere else one would suppose it to be built on indestructible foundations, and upheld by every possible guarantee. How, in short, can such a thing be explained in a nation religious by conviction, cold by temperament, moral by instinct, having a deep respect for women, to whom it grants, apart from the equality of political rights, social privileges which are theirs only in the New World? How can we admit that

these different elements, of which each in itself constitutes a moral force in the service of a social cause, and of which the whole number represents the sum of the conditions requisite to assure a twofold consecration, human and divine, for the marriage tie—how can we admit that these elements in the end relax these ties to the point where one must believe that they exist only by the will of the parties, and not by the authority of the law? Certainly one cannot maintain but that, assailed by a licentious literature, ridiculed on the stage, where success is proportionate to scandal, and discussed by publicists, the institution of marriage is, in the United States, the butt of incessant and repeated attacks, and that public opinion, indifferent to the rights of women, shows toward those who scorn it only a sorry complaisance. In fact, novelists, authors, and journalists seem to have enough to do in defending themselves without making any attacks. They demand, with a loud voice, air and room: they are suffocating, they say, in the narrow limits where woman's unreasonableness keeps them. If of late their protestations have become louder, their claims surely are nothing extraordinary.

"Since the author of *Tom Jones*," wrote

Thackeray, "not one novelist among us has been able to portray a human being as he is. It is necessary for us to clothe him in a certain dress, to give him a certain character and a conventional manner of speech. Our readers, especially our women readers, do not admit the natural in our art." This was written thirty years ago, and ever since, American writers have not ceased to reiterate Thackeray's complaints. They blame "the young girl," the idol for whom much is sacrificed, the terror of the writers and the editors of reviews, who bow before her, slaves to her wishes, to her preferences, and who tremble at the idea of offending her modesty and delicate feelings. Rider Haggard and "Ouida" in England, Boyesen, Julian Hawthorne, Lathrop, and even Henry James in the United States, demand a release from "this insupportable tyranny." If those who are advocates of a national literature think the hour is come to shake off the yoke, if the most impetuous of them declare with Edgar Fawcett that "modesty is a thing of latitude and longitude" and that the American novelist is "struggling, paralysed, in the bonds of a false prudery," still the majority think, with Charles Dudley Warner, that "all that a writer can hope to do is not to limit

himself to writing only for young girls, and not to admit them as judges without appeal of the worth of a literary work."

Women authors go further in their affirmations. "Either the young girl or the writer—one of the two—ought to be sacrificed, it seems to me," writes Mrs. Gertrude Franklin Atherton. "If an author depicts the world as he sees it, he is reproached with corrupting innocence. If he represents it as he wishes, he puts himself in the wrong. Surely the young girl is not a factor to be overlooked, especially in America; but it is her mother's business and not that of the writer to enlighten her. An author owes his readers truth, and the whole truth. It is for him to tell it artistically and without offending morality." "Let us, for once, dispose of the young girl," writes Julian Hawthorne, with a certain brutality, "or else let her make up her mind to hear and to understand the truth. Her would-be champions affirm that this would make her no longer read us. I have an idea that she would read us just the same, and find no more evil in us."

For want of writers, should we blame the laws and a guilty tolerance? Neither morality nor the laws excuse wrongdoers. We have shown above how, between a wronged

family and the courts, that are always ready to inflict crushing penalties on him, the profession of a Don Juan cannot thrive in the United States. Moreover, the American woman is practical, and rarely has an exalted imagination. It is neither her weakness, nor man's boldness, nor any excess of literature, nor the press, nor the stage which must be blamed. These different causes, which elsewhere have helped more or less to weaken respect for the marriage tie, have no influence here. Is it for want of religious feeling? Nowhere has this feeling withstood the shock of modern ideas as bravely as it has in the United States. Indifference to religion is not good form any more than atheism is fashionable. Universal tolerance for it has not engendered universal scepticism. Catholicism is strong, thanks to the conservatism of the Irish, and Protestantism plays an important rôle in every sphere of private and public life. The evil is not, then, due to a lack of religious feeling; the cause is elsewhere. It lies in the multiplicity of the marriage and divorce laws. Each State has its own, for each State, being supreme in itself, has passed laws on the subject, and, far from starting from the same premises to reach the same conclusion, has enacted different provisions.

Everywhere men are inspired with the same religious and moral ideas, and this leads to a surprising disorder, to the most absurd and confused complications, to the question which many married couples may ask themselves, and which the New York *Herald* * propounds to them: "Are you legally married, wife or mistress, husband or lover? Have our marriage and divorce laws answered the purpose which we have the right to expect of them, or has the time come to declare them defective?"

This confusion explains itself, and these consequences were to be foreseen. It was not enough, in short, to strive separately for the same result. It was desirable to take account of the different elements which, working unconsciously on the mind of the legislators, have made them adopt different limitations according to circumstances, and to consider also the moral atmosphere which they breathed and with which they were inspired. They legislated not for a nation, but for a particular section, a single State, often of small population; and the laws which they enacted, being limited to this State, recorded first of all the local customs and tendencies, the traditions and ideas of the people—here urban,

* January 2, 1890.

there rural, here exclusively Puritan, there formed by the immigration of both Catholics and Protestants. Again, the prosperity of the State depends on the increase of population, and each is interested in favouring this increase, in drawing to itself the emigrant or the American nomad, in simplifying as much as possible by its legislation the accomplishment of social acts, in rendering marriage easy and divorce also, in avoiding those complicated administrative formalities which are irksome to an independent race, and one made still more independent by an admixture of adventurers. On the one hand, an excessive simplification of the conditions requisite for a lawful marriage; on the other, different causes for divorce in each State; everywhere, especially at the beginning, great facilities for obtaining through naturalisation the civil and political rights which were liberally conceded. On this point logic harmonised with self-interest. The starting point of the settlement had been the protest of an oppressed conscience against a religious autocracy; of liberty against despotism; of civil independence against the minute system of regulation found in Europe; and the youth of America, which was drawing the discontented

and the impatient to her, and recruiting partisans among her enemies, felt her own strength grow as she beheld the increase of her citizens. Instinctively newcomers flocked whither the laws encroached least on their liberty. As citizens they were voters and were eligible to office, so their local legislation was prompted by their desires and reflected their wishes. To-day it is still the same, and if in certain States of dense population, civilised and well controlled, more rigorous laws are also better observed, in others, and especially in the new States of the West, they are still in a simple, rudimentary condition, and few in number.

Of the multiplicity and variety of the marriage and divorce laws the following is one very marked illustration: the conditions essential to marriage or divorce being different in one State from those in the neighbouring States, a marriage contracted in New York has been broken by a divorce granted in Connecticut, where the husband had his home. A second illustration is also curious: A man having lived for several days with his mistress in one State, and then having broken off his relations with her, and being legally married later, was convicted of bigamy; this sole fact of having lived with

a woman, even though not married to her, making in that State a legal marriage.

In the first case the woman succeeded in having the Connecticut divorce annulled by the New York courts, but only so far as concerns the State of New York. The husband is none the less legally divorced from her in Connecticut. There he can marry again, and afterward annul this second marriage in another State and make a third. According to the State in which he lives, he is the legal husband of a woman from whom the courts of another State would free him at his request.

## II.

While on this subject, let us cite an example taken from the records of the American courts.

Whose wife could Miss Jane Quick have been in May, 1868? A fortune depended on the solution of this problem, and Miss Jane Quick would have gone to great lengths to answer it. All that she could say was that on the 10th of June, 1850, she had married James P. Brenton in Ohio. From there they went to Nebraska, and in 1863 to California, In 1864 Brenton left her without telling her where he was going. He did not return. She went to live with one Joseph Walker, a

distiller, and on this account she became the subject of gossip in the city. The report spread that Brenton was dead and that she had married Walker. This report certainly expressed her intention. Walker made, among other things, a bitter tonic liked by the residents of Stockton, and which Mrs. Walker succeeded in selling. Encouraged by his success, which was in part due to her, and stimulated by her, he put his tonic upon the market of San Francisco, and, thanks to clever advertising, in which she took the initiative, made a considerable sum from it. The enterprise was a successful one—so much so that two rich capitalists took a half interest in it, and in a few years Walker realised a large fortune. In March, 1868, Mrs. Brenton, all this time without news of her fugitive husband, demanded and obtained a divorce on the ground of desertion. In November of the same year she married Walker, and, consequently, in May had not considered herself his wife. Then both of them came to New York. But Miss Quick could not be said to be happy in the choice of her husbands, for shortly after, she separated from Walker, who gave her an annuity of eight hundred dollars. In 1881 Walker died. In May, 1868, the date of his association with the capitalists, was she the wife or

the mistress of Walker? Were her rights separate from his or identical with them? She bore his name, passed for his wife, and the court decided that she was such, although the marriage ceremony had not occurred until six months later.

The examination of the marriage and divorce laws necessitates in each State the constant attention of the legislator. Everywhere he wishes to protect and defend the woman against herself as well as against man; to protect her from the snares which are laid before her inexperience; to limit the abuse of marital authority, and, as a result, to condemn the offender to heavy penalties, to multiply the causes of divorce, to insert in the laws sections which are most favourable to the weaker sex, as is done in Kentucky, for example, where the sole fact of a man's having put the tradesmen on their guard against the debts which his wife is making, and of having told them that he refused to pay these debts, has been held a sufficient cause for a divorce. The same system is criticised in other States where a man who has lived with a woman, who has let her bear his name, and who has treated her as a legitimate wife is considered legally married to her. There is seen in this system a new guarantee accorded to her sex, a protection

granted to the young girl lured away from her family. They even go further in admitting that a proposition of marriage, even if not carried out, could, in some cases, give the woman the rights and privileges of a wife. One of the most curious cases of this kind is the suit brought by one Annie Clark against a young man named K——, son of a prominent citizen of Minnesota.

Well known under her Christian name Annie, the plaintiff petitioned on the 1st of March, 1887, before the Supreme Court in the circuit of New York, for a limited divorce and an allowance for her support from her would-be husband. These are the facts as they appeared from her own deposition and from that of the only witness whom she produced. From the start she realised that her reputation was much in question, as she was in the habit of frequenting public balls, concert-halls, and saloons; and as the young people to whom she sub-rented rooms in the house where she lived had repeatedly had trouble with the police. This being admitted, she said that she had married Mr. K—— on the 24th of the preceding April. Where did the marriage occur and who were the witnesses?

This she did not explain with any definiteness, and the accused strongly denied it.

He had, it seems, made the acquaintance of Annie in a barroom which he ordinarily frequented. The bartender had introduced them, and they drank to their better acquaintance. Annie, a notorious drinker, accepted everything offered her, and almost daily they met there and passed hours together, emptying glass after glass. On the 24th of April, said the defendant, he drank more than usual, and Annie took him to her house. He had no remembrance of having asked her to marry him; he was intoxicated, and did not return to his home until the next day. The sole witness called by Annie Clark, the bartender, said that K—— was an excellent customer, generous, always paying for Annie's drinks, and often giving him a dollar as a tip. On the 24th of April he remembered that Annie, answering a question of K——'s which he had not heard, had said: "Don't speak so. I am not a woman whom you can marry." To which K—— replied: "Very well, very well. I meant what I said." He was intoxicated, added the witness, and they went out together. The court, after the hearing, decided that, if there was any offer of marriage, or marriage itself, there was no proof of it, and the defendant, being in a state of intoxication, was

unconscious of his acts, and the plaintiff was overruled.

The affair is a low one, and the persons themselves are of but little interest. What attracts our attention is the fact that such a suit is possible; that a woman of this class is able to allege her meeting with her lover of one day, and the pretended offer of marriage,—the sole witness of which was a bartender, whose testimony was ambiguous,—in order to claim a separation, which would be a real recognition of marriage, and which would allow her to bear the name of her victim, and later, if she survived him, to make good a claim to his property. The surprising part is that if the bartender had been less positive about the intoxicated state of the defendant, the judgment would have been different, and K—— would have been declared married. It would have been possible, it is true, for him to demand a divorce, and easy for him to obtain it, but it would have rested on the payment of an annuity for her support proportionate to his means, and Annie Clark would have borne his name.

The Court of Appeals in New York recently made a decision, which was, in brief, that a divorced man is still the husband of his wife; at least, that he cannot marry again outside of the jurisdiction of the court

—in New Jersey, for example. It decided, on the other hand, that the sum allotted to a woman in whose favour the divorce has been granted shall be paid, in every case, so long as the husband lives. "The said allowance," says the decision, "is not meant merely to insure the woman's actual maintenance, but to represent a fine imposed on the husband, and from the payment of which death alone can free him."

The circumstances under which this last decision was made are characteristic. A man married a rich widow. Shortly after, she sued for a divorce and obtained it, as well as a large annuity. Possessed of the fortune which had accrued from the annuity which her husband paid her, she married a Southern planter, very rich himself. The divorced husband, considering himself, under the circumstances, freed from the heavy burden of paying the pension, began to think of marrying again. He fell in love with a young girl, pretty and distinguished, but without fortune, and not being able to marry within the jurisdiction of the court, he went with his *fiancée* beyond the limits of the State and they were married. At the date fixed for the payment of the annuity to his first wife he refused to pay it, offering to prove that she had no need of it to live,

being very much richer than he. He lost his suit, appealed it, and the highest court of the State rendered the decision which we have set forth above.

From an examination it is shown that there are in New York at the present time a number of women who receive an allowance for their support not from one husband alone, but from two and three, from all of whom they have been successively divorced, and this is the case even when they are living with their third or even their fourth husband. If one of the unfortunate ex-husbands does not promptly pay his annuity at the time it becomes due, a simple notification sent to the court suffices. The delinquent is arrested for "contempt of court," is imprisoned, the costs of his arrest and detention fall on him, and they are so great that no one runs a similar risk twice. The story of a well-known dramatic author is still remembered in New York. Condemned on his wife's complaint for contempt of court, and imprisoned in Ludlow Street Gaol, he was not able to pay the sum required for her support, and resigned himself to remaining in prison as long as it pleased his ex-wife to keep him there. To while away his leisure hours he set himself to work, wrote several plays which had a great success, and, thus

enriched, made arrangements in the prison with his late wife as to his release, and his exoneration from paying her annuity, by means of a lump sum paid in full discharge of her claims. Everywhere in the customs and in the laws we find in the United States this anxious solicitude, often excessive, in regard to women. Where, in our European cynicism, we can see only a vulgar intrigue or an attempt to extort money, we can hardly understand decisions of the courts which in the New World astonish no one. We are slow to admit that a married woman should give evidence in open court against herself, prove her own misconduct, produce the letters of her accomplice, and all this to support a suit for damages, entered by the husband against the lover, and founded on the fact that the defendant had turned to his own profit the alienation of the wife's affection.

But the fair sex has not only the privilege of enlightening justice, and of making its task an easy one. Specialists in law say that among the divorce suits brought on account of infidelity on the husband's part there is often neither an inquiry to make nor proofs to be sought for, the husband himself coming forward to put them into the counsel's hands, and bringing voluntarily

the letters which prove his own guilt. Some go so far as to help the suit by proposing to write under dictation the statement which is necessary to fill out the lawyer's blanks. They explain the doubtful points, tell the precise locality where the offence was committed, and show what evidence is necessary to remove all doubt.

For so much energy in behalf of truth they impose only one condition: that the woman be contented with the divorce without exacting alimony. Thus they recover their liberty and keep their money. It is the silence of witnesses that greatly hinders the action of justice, as is proved by a recent and celebrated suit, in which the correspondence of the guilty wife left nothing to be desired. The husband had intercepted the letters addressed to her. A frivolous woman, but careful and methodical, she had kept all of them, and the evidence was complete. Day after day, year after year, her intrigues and adventures of all kinds could be traced. The high social position of her husband and that of his wife made this suit much talked about. The result seemed certain, but the accused denied everything, asserting that the letters were a trust committed to her by a friend whose name she refused to give, and declaring that

she was ignorant of the writer of the letters. The accomplices, though well known, preserved the same silence. Called as witnesses, they swore that they knew nothing, and that they did not recognise the writer; so that, despite the evidence, and from the absence of all oral testimony, the court had to acquit the guilty and to refuse a divorce to the outraged husband.

Nothing less is necessary, in short, than undeniable proof in order to triumph over the judges' chivalrous feeling that, notwithstanding all her mistakes and faults, woman is more often wronged than wrongful. The same judges are so much less indulgent where men are concerned that it is not surprising that adventuresses succeed. A proof of this occurred in a case pending before the United States Court in the district of Brooklyn, in which Mr. Charles C—— had to defend his fortune against the intrigues of one Leonora Arnold. She claimed no less than a million dollars, and produced in support of her claim the following facts, told by her mother:

In 1855 there lived in New York a Mrs. C——, a widow, who had two sons, Charles and Blaise, and a fortune of two millions. Dying, she divided the fortune equally between her two children, stipulat-

ing that in the case of one's dying without issue his share should fall to the survivor. Blaise died first, unmarried, and his brother became the sole possessor of the fortune. At this point the claim of Leonora Arnold was put forward, based upon the evidence of her mother, Josephine Cregier. In 1854 the latter said that she had made the acquaintance of Blaise C—— at a dancing school where young men and women met together and were taught by a master. Blaise fell in love with her and proposed that she follow him to Baltimore, where, he said, he would marry her. Blaise was young and in love. She knew that he was rich, and she accepted him. They started, travelling leisurely, staying at the same hotels, where they passed for young married people, and finally reaching Baltimore, where they spent several weeks. There was no longer any question of marriage. It may have been forgotten, or perhaps she never believed there would be any and refrained from speaking of it, but after a while they returned to New York, and in 1855 Leonora was born. The union was not a happy one. Blaise never acknowledged it and never even spoke of it; his relatives and his friends ignored the subject.

Abandoned after several years by her lover, Josephine disappeared, and one fine day went to Charleston, and there lived with one John Jackson, as whose wife she passed. She followed him to Nashville in Tennessee, and later, hearing of Blaise's death, returned to New York to claim in her daughter's name her rights from the last heir, Mr. Charles C——, against whom she brought suit for the payment of the million dollars with interest, claiming that her brief stay in Baltimore, where she was supposed to be Blaise's wife, was in itself a marriage and made her child legitimate. Though it was the large amount in question which gave prominence to this suit, the principle is the same. From her own testimony the plaintiff had always lived in a questionable manner. There was nothing—no letter, no document of any kind—to prove that Blaise had ever promised to marry her; nothing to prove that she had demanded marriage, either at the time or afterward. It is the commonplace story of the escapade of a rich and idle young man and of an unprincipled girl, seduced by wealth. But public opinion agreed with the judge that he was the guilty one, for he had led her astray. If he was her first lover, he was probably the cause of

her having a second, and the reason why, having once turned from the right road, she could not go back to it. If the laws of Maryland, in which State Baltimore is, or the law of any one of the States through which they passed together, and in which they were taken for a married couple, had admitted that this fact alone constitutes a valid union, Leonora Arnold would be a legitimate child, and could claim the million left by Blaise C——, and to which his brother was the apparent heir.

## III.

What is the remedy for this confusion of laws, which results in a confusion of morals; for this excessive simplification of legislation relating to marriage, which leads to a multiplicity of divorces, as in Connecticut, where there is one divorce for every ten marriages, as there is one in seven in California?

The most efficacious and the simplest remedy without a doubt would be to substitute for the local laws which are passed in the different States, and which regulate in each the conditions for marriage and divorce, a single Federal law common to all and the same in all. This was done in a

different case when the increase of business and the multiplicity of business transactions caused constant trouble as to the jurisdiction of different States: a uniform law of bankruptcy was substituted for the many contradictory ones. But simple as this remedy seems, and efficacious as it might be, it is, and will be, impracticable. The eighth section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States, which treats of the powers of Congress, confers no right of legislation in a matter regarding which each State is supreme. In order to grant this right an amendment to the Constitution is necessary, to be voted on by the two Houses of Congress and ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the States,—which is actually, in the opinion of every intelligent man, an impossibility. Taken individually, every State in the Union would vote in favour of this measure if she were assured that her own local regulations would become national, and that her laws on the subject would be extended to all the other States; but apart from this impossible case not one will have her right removed to legislate at her own free will, and in accordance with her own interests. Nothing shows more clearly how insurmountable is this difficulty than what occurs in the

State of New York, where the law recognises only one cause for absolute divorce—adultery, but where they are frequently forced to admit other reasons. The press has in vain insisted on the fact that a husband's infidelity is not the only cause which can make marriage insupportable to a wife ; that there are others, physical and moral, which are just as troublesome, if not more so. The law has resisted every criticism, and one could no more obtain the consent of the State of New York to admit other causes for divorce than that of other States to give up one or two of the ten or a dozen causes which are recognised in their codes.

Granted the impossibility at this point of proceeding by amending the Constitution, one sets his ingenuity to work to investigate the difficulty, and thinks he has found in the Constitution itself the means sought. The tenth section of the first article stipulates that no State can "enter into any treaty, alliance, or confederation, grant letters of marque and reprisal, coin money, emit bills of credit, make anything but gold and silver coin a tender in payment of debts, . . . or pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts, or grant any title of nobility."

Although the context of the article seems at first sight to avoid all connection between

the article itself and the question of marriage and divorce laws, one may appeal to the fact that State legislatures are forbidden from passing any "laws which impair a contract," in contesting their right to legislate on the question of marriage and divorce, which is of a contractual nature. We must admit that by this clause, inserted in a section which neither directly or indirectly treats of the question, the original legislators might have intended to take away from the States and reserve for federal power alone the right of legislating on the question. The unreasonableness of the supposition will probably make this view untenable, but, were it admitted, at the most it would justify the passage of a law declaring valid and positive in every State a divorce pronounced by one of them.

This alone would not remove the existing complications, although it would be a step away from the actual state of things. It is likewise proposed to reserve equally to the Federal courts alone the right of hearing divorce suits in all cases in which the two parties are not originally from the same State. This measure avoids any conflict of jurisdiction and the disagreeable consequences resulting from a divorce granted to one of the parties in one State and refused

to the second in another, valid here and invalid elsewhere. The most important point to be regulated is the actual system of "notification by publication," rich in fraud and in evasion of the law, which permits one of the parties to claim a divorce unknown to the second, to obtain it without a hearing from the interested party, so that for several years she does not even know that it has been granted. These cases occur frequently, and one often meets a married woman who hears by accident, and a long while after, that her husband has been divorced from her. The most recent of these cases is the following:

After a very lively dispute between a certain husband and wife, caused by the husband's conduct, people noticed a comparative tranquillity existing between them. Both were anxious to avoid a scandal, and so they decided to separate amicably. With a sufficiently large sum which her husband put at her disposal the wife left with her mother for a long European trip. Shortly after her departure the husband began a suit for divorce. A copy of the said petition and of the allegations made having to be sent to his wife, it was necessary to give her address. He did not know it, he said; his wife was abroad,

and was not stopping for any length of time in any place known to him. Such a case is foreseen by the law. The judge thereupon ordered the insertion of the request and of the forthcoming decree in two local papers—one a special and legal one, read by lawyers alone; the other of only a small circulation outside of the State. The necessary time having expired, the suit was heard. The husband alone produced evidence. Ignorant of what was going on, the opposite party was not represented, and the divorce was granted. Eighteen months later, upon her return to the United States, the wife was told of what had been done. Her husband had married again, and her place had been legally filled by another.

An analogous case recently took place in Kentucky. In the absence of the husband, whom business had called to Australia, his wife demanded and obtained a divorce on the simple allegation, this time, that she was a member of a religious order which demanded absolute continency. This clause occurs in the code of laws in Kentucky, which are more rigorous than in the neighbouring States so far as concerns marriage. A young girl is not able to marry there before the age of twenty-one without the consent of her parents. From this fact, to

which the amorous Kentucky youths submit with but an ill grace, arises a special business, which has its headquarters at Jeffersonville, a city on the border of the neighbouring State of Indiana.

The following announcement appeared in the American papers of January, 1889: "For sale, at Jeffersonville, Ind., a matrimonial bureau, well patronised. The situation is agreeable and easy, allowing pleasant acquaintances, and pleasing to a young and active man. Address the proprietor, William Kratz, matrimonial agent, who will guarantee a profit, and will give access to his accounts." Jeffersonville is, in short, the Gretna Green of this part of the Union, and William Kratz plays the rôle of the legendary blacksmith. Every Thursday, autumn and winter, every day in spring and summer, William Kratz is at the wharf of the Louisville steamers. With a glance of the eye he takes in every passenger, and quietly hands out his card, on which is inscribed: "William Kratz, matrimonial agent, procures for those desiring marriage all necessary information and assistance." "There is nothing easier," he says, "than to recognise a couple who are in love. They have a way of descending the gangplank and exchanging tender looks. They have an

embarrassed manner, as though seeking information which they dare not ask, but to which they listen eagerly when I give it to them. It sometimes happens, although rarely, that I am mistaken, and speak to couples who are thinking of anything except marriage, but I never complain of their manners. The young men laugh and the young women blush. I can mention some who return for good cause, and so become my clients."* Mr. Kratz thinks that an elopement in Kentucky, followed by a marriage in Jeffersonville, would cost exactly $9.20, or 46 francs—1 franc for the journey, 10 francs for the permit (19 francs 50 when one wishes it "gilt-edged," with certification), 25 francs for the lawyer, and 10 francs for the agent. "For this price these affairs are comfortably arranged," Mr. Kratz adds; but these prices may be reduced. A reduction may be obtained from the lawyer, and the agent may be contented with five francs if one promises to entertain him on his next visit to Kentucky. This is what Mr. Kratz gives us to understand in speaking of "pleasant acquaintances." Why is Thursday the best day of the week? This he did not tell us,

* Louisville *Journal*, January 19, 1889.

but he said so, and we can believe him. "Every Thursday," he said, "I have much to do, and you do not know all that my agency does for Jeffersonville. It is a true blessing for the ferries, for restaurants, lawyers, and hotel men." Mr. Kratz is convinced that he is a benefactor of mankind, and that his paid intervention, which, after all, brings about a legal marriage, ought to be encouraged.

That which is more surprising is that a man can openly brave the law of the State in which he lives, and that to do it with impunity costs him only three cents (fifteen centimes). This case happens not once, but a hundred times. Mrs. Smith had serious reasons for suspecting her husband. Having discovered him *en flagrant délit*, she sought a divorce before the court of New York, and obtained it, with a decree forbidding him to marry a second time. It cost Mr. Smith only the small sum stated above to cross the river to the neighbouring State of New Jersey, and there contract legally another marriage. This done, he returned to New York and busied himself with his own affairs. On one side of the Hudson River he is divorced, on the other side he is married. In New York his second wife is only his mistress; on the other side

she is his legitimate wife ; a bigamist here, he has there acted with perfect legality.

The case of Isabella Davis is more complicated. For fifteen years married to Amos Johnson, she married in succession R. MacLane, Abram Elmore, Paul Hatton, William Ferguson, and Samuel Nickson. They were all alive at the same time and living in different States without being divorced from her. For the time being, and while waiting for something better, she passed for the wife of Samuel Nickson, with whom she lived in North Carolina. The other five husbands put in a claim for their wife or their liberty, and the suit was pending before five distinct courts.

If one enters into the study of the divorce laws in the forty-four States of the Union, one finds himself in the midst of an inextricable maze of causes and limitations from which are deduced, not without some trouble, sixteen principal ones which are generally recognised. Some States, like New York, recognise only one, others as many as ten ; but no two of them have decreed quite the same ones.

The sixteen causes are : adultery, bigamy, voluntary desertion, the time of which varies according to locality, continued absence for five years, the husband's living with a col-

oured woman, madness or imbecility, assault and battery, being a vagabond, serious injuries, imprisonment for crime, habitual drunkenness or the use of opium, impotence, refusal of the wife to live with her husband, refusal of the husband to support his wife, misconduct, joining a religious sect which prescribes continence.

To these numerous causes several States have added a clause that is more indefinite, more elastic, by which the door already ajar is still more widely opened to the two parties, in leaving to the courts the right to grant divorces at their own discretion. From these facts we see what a careless legislature, composed of representatives who obey local prejudices and the capricious demands of a people who are often but little enlightened, can do in the United States regarding the institution of marriage, by all held sacred and considered by the founders of the Republic as one of the indestructible pillars of the social organisation. This confusion, sanctioned by the laws, is in strange contrast to the moral and religious theory which holds marriage to be immutable, with its apparent professed respect for the marriage tie and the solemn ritual which binds and sanctifies it. The contradiction lies between the point of departure and the point attained ;

between that which we wish and the results which we secure. It is much more noticeable if we observe to what consequences unswerving logic can lead misguided spirits, even when acting in good faith.

In the face of the weakness of the laws, and the dire confusion in the midst of which men struggle in vain, arises negation, the radical solution, destroying past traditions, sweeping away useless laws and unobserved enactments, in order to give on the one hand free play to human passions, and on the other to substitute rigorous and immutable limitations for shifting and ineffective legislation. Some, like the Shakers, profess absolute continence, advocates of superhuman and destructive virtues ; others, like the Mormons, return to ancient traditions, to polygamy and rapid procreation ; still others preach Free Love. All of these rally partisans and recruit followers. What more favourable statute for Free Love can one make than the actual divorce law of Indiana, which frees the husband from the duty of supporting his wife from whom he separates without emotion and without reason, and whom he leaves to the mercy of chance. Mormon polygamy at least obliges the husband to look after the needs of his harem, and to support his wife and children. What would marriage

be in the United States if it were set aside by a hostile press, if it were assailed by all anti-religious and anti-social literature, and by the teachings of anarchists impatient to destroy that which exists, with nothing but unfettered lust and brutal instinct to offer as substitutes? How much more to be opposed would the present state of things be, how much more justified the fears that we have expressed! The situation as it is revealed to the observer's eyes is serious, and if the cause is not yet lost, the results on which the Americans flatter themselves are at least compromised. To a period of moral and intellectual development, and of prosperity without precedent, a season of confusion and uncertainty has succeeded. Doubts have arisen in the presence of the results already attained, as to the excellence of their institutions. They ask themselves if some mistake has not been made when they see the cult of woman and the exaggerated respect paid to her resulting in such unexpected consequences.

Unexpected they are; and if the statesmen, the lawyers, the thinkers, and the philosophers of the United States have never professed to suppress vice and to make virtue supreme in the land, at least they have wished to establish a social system superior

to that of Europe, to profit from the lessons of the past; and during more than half a century the facts have justified their hopes. The disappointment is only the more bitter in seeing the same instincts tending to the same results, and in having pessimists affirm once more that virtue is a purely human institution, while passion is a divine one, and that the existing social organisation is powerless.

Better results were expected from the Constitution than it has given. Men saw in it a universal panacea, the reconciliation of every man's rights and duties; and as for woman, her recognition and her freedom. We cannot justly deny that the great Republic has striven with every effort toward this result, and that for the moment she appears to have reached it. If it is slipping from her, the fault is not wholly hers, and already she returns undismayed to find out new paths that she can follow toward the end that she aspires to attain.

## IV.

It is, indeed, time, for the evil is increasing. Powerless to remedy it, the marriage and divorce laws only aggravate it by their very multiplicity and incoherence. In as-

similating them to a single type, in eliminating enactments suggested by a solicitude more zealous than intelligent, one may hope to limit, if not to suppress, the abuses which they sanction; but what a reform of this nature does not of itself know how to check, is the spread of false ideas and a moral confusion, long delayed by the simple and healthful life of the first colonists, by their being scattered over a sparsely populated continent, by the relative isolation of their lives, by their general comfort, and by the fact that luxury and poverty were equally unknown. The sudden change which induced foreign imigration and recruited a working army among the ranks of an agricultural population; which everywhere called into being great factories and industrial centres; and which substituted enormous fortunes and great distress in place of a limited but general comfort, brought about at the same time a series of social phenomena. The same causes have at last produced the same effects as in Europe—the agglomeration of the working classes, the hatred of wealth, the threatening socialism, a desperate battle for existence, the rule of money, bitter competition, and, as a consequence of all this, the subjection, or even the degradation of woman, who, unable to do

battle, is stripped of her former sanctity and made subject to man's beck and call. Nothing can be a better proof of how far social phenomena are independent of any political system, and of the illusions into which one is beguiled, so that he thinks them realities, in attributing a magical virtue to one or another form of government, according to his personal preferences.

Democracy is of no more avail than absolute power in sheltering itself from evils of which neither system is the cause and which neither is able to remedy. Where less than in the United States does it seem as though the leprosy of prostitution could be propagated and spread, against which everything seemed to unite at the very start in guarding the young Republic? How many other barriers have since been added to the original religious and moral safeguards! How much energy is devoted to strangling the evil at its birth, to checking it and circumscribing it, to opening to woman new paths, and to assuring her independence by offering remunerative employment to her intelligence and to her work! American democracy was the first to give woman access to various administrative and public functions, and to assert for her an equal right with man in the so-called liberal professions.

So, too, this democracy took the initiative in granting her the right to vote in certain cases, and the day is drawing near when this right, more widely known, will permit her to enlarge her circle of influence. Surely we should not reproach the American legislators for having quite unconsciously accelerated the progress of an evil which they have done everything to banish, any more than we can censure public opinion for having been indifferent to it.

Private effort also has effectively laboured in the cause of social purity, and we see noble women, honoured by the poor of New York, who have spent millions to aid their lost sisters, and who have founded homes of refuge for young girls, and spread, even to the most distant parts of the Union, the benefits of their inexhaustible charity.

It is at the centre and at the two extremes that the social evil chiefly flourishes: in large cities, like New York, where there are no less than thirty thousand prostitutes; in the great industrial centres, like Chicago, and in distant localities beyond the confines of civilisation and legislation, swarming with adventurers, with desperadoes and cowboys, who voluntarily live a lawless life, and give free play to their drunken desires, their brutal instincts, and their

savage passions. Here is a world apart and little known, wholly foreign to our European manners and customs. From time to time a series of murders, bloody orgies, or frightful deeds of vengeance recall its existence and raise a corner of the veil which hides it, and then silence again falls; its isolation, its remoteness, and the unsocial humour of its inhabitants baffle curiosity and defy control.

This society is waiting for its historian, for a Fenimore Cooper and Bret Harte in one; and, as a fact, it is well worth the labour of description. From the part which woman plays in it, it falls within the scope of our present work. In a few years it will have disappeared, the flood of civilisation will have submerged it, and from these strange types legends will have sprung into existence.

Who will then believe the astonishing adventures of Belle Starr, the idol of the Western bandits, a living defiance of the law, incarnating in herself the audacity, the vices and the intrepid courage of these outlaws who, from father to son, boast of "dying in their boots," knife and revolver in hand, as she herself did on the 3d of February, 1889, at the age of thirty-five, after the strangest existence imaginable,

leaving a son and a daughter who have followed in her footsteps? From detached fragments of her diary (for Belle Starr had received the education of every Western girl), we are able to reconstruct her adventurous career, incomprehensible in our world, and impossible anywhere else than in America.

Belle Starr was born at Carthage in the State of Missouri. Her father, chief of the Southern guerrillas, took an active part in the War of Secession; and from infancy Belle Starr showed a passion for blows, for acts of violence, for the pillage and the murder of that bloody period. After the war her father emigrated to Kansas with what was left of his band. She went there with him. An intrepid Amazon, from the time that she was ten years old she handled the revolver, the lasso, the carbine, and the bowie-knife. A girl brought up by rough companions, by men expert in these matters, she showed the enthusiastic boldness and the courage of a child. In such a school she developed rapidly. Hatred rankled in these fierce spirits—the hatred of the conquered for their conquerors, the hatred of adventurers and rebels against order, law, and social regulation. Having revolted against the North, they continued in revolt against

everything that personified the North ; they shut themselves up in the solitudes, whence, like wolves, they came out only to make their presence known by some brutal defiance of the civilisation they hated, by some act of brigandage in which they took part often at the loss of life. Belle Starr was not the least bold or the least daring of them, and hardly had she passed from infancy before her name, her boldness, and her beauty were celebrated from the borders of Arkansas to those of the Platte River. Precocious in all things, she fell in love at the age of fourteen with Bob Younger, a famous bandit. Her father refused his consent to their marriage, so she made him elope with her, and married him on horseback, surrounded by a score of desperadoes. One of them, John Fisher, on whose head a price had been set, held the bride upon her horse, while a judge more dead than alive was roused from his house in the middle of the night to marry them. Three weeks later Bob Younger, pursued by the law, had to flee, and Belle Starr returned to her father. In the hope of baffling the search made for her by her fugitive husband the father put her in a boarding school in Parker County ; but Bob Younger was not long in making his appearance. He again ran off with her

and gained the borders of Missouri; but, tracked by the officers of the law, he was forced to return to Kansas. From that moment, as his companion, she lived only as he did, by robbery and rapine. Dressed as a man, she rode by his side, followed by desperadoes whom she subdued by her bravery and captivated by her charms. Together they pillaged isolated farms, carried away horses and cattle, which they sold in distant towns, burned the houses of those who denounced them, cutting off by their Indian cunning the pursuit of the troops, or, when driven into a corner, facing about, and fiercely engaging in battle. Close pressed by a detachment of United States soldiers, Bob Younger was compelled once more to take to flight. Belle Starr did not follow him, but gave him a successor, choosing as her lover James Reed, a worthy bandit, whose skill was proverbial. With him she went to Texas, which they travelled over in every sense of the word, stopping to plunder stages, and pushing their boldness as far as to rob the Federal courier in daylight at the very gates of the city of Austin. Belle herself in her memoirs relates one of their boldest strokes:

"We arrived," she writes, "Reed and I, at Eufaula, where by chance we met one of

Reed's friends, Tom Roberts, at the hotel. He spoke to us of a man named Wat Greyson, who lived on a lonely farm. He was said to be rich, and also to have in his possession funds intended for the Indian tribes. We decided to put them into circulation, so at nightfall, armed to the teeth and provided with fresh horses, we knocked at his door. Disguised as a young Cherokee Indian, I introduced myself as a poor wandering boy who asked hospitality. The door was immediately opened and I entered, quickly followed by Reed and Roberts. To seize the Indian servant who had opened the door, and to bind him, was the work of an instant. In the next room was Mrs. Greyson, who began to cry as soon as she saw us, screaming loudly for help. I approached her bed, placed my revolver on her forehead, and said: 'One word more and I will blow your brains out.'' She was silent, but at her cries a young man ran up. Just as he crossed the threshold Reed laid him low with a single blow. He rolled on the floor like a slaughtered ox.

"Awakened by the noise, Wat Greyson entered; but in the face of our three revolvers he could make no resistance. We called upon him to tell us where the money was, but he refused. Bent on forcing him to do it,

we resolved to try hanging first, and while my two companions held him I looked about and found a strong cord, with which I tied his feet, and passed a loop around his neck. This done, we hoisted him to the branch of an oak ; he began to strangle, and signed to us to take him down. Thereupon he showed us his hiding place, pointing out the table in the centre of the room, and under a wolf-skin rug a trap-door. We raised it, and I discovered a ladder leading down into a cellar. I descended, Roberts accompanying me with a lantern, while Reed took care of the old man, who was half dead. At once I discovered two boxes full of gold pieces. The second time I came up with an old kettle also filled with gold, and on the third trip I brought up three bundles of bank-notes, thirty-four thousand dollars in all. Then we untied the old man, but, maddened by the loss of his money, he took the cord, passed it about his neck, and said: 'Hang me now; I am ruined.' His death would have been no advantage to us, and we left him. The next day we gave Roberts his share, and, well knowing that the affair would cause some talk, we agreed to return to Texas. It was just in time. In crossing the Red River, the first thing we saw was a placard pasted on a tree, with these words:

'Seventeen thousand dollars reward for James Reed, alive or dead.' They were on our track; to balk those who followed us we separated, making Texas the rendezvous."

Belle Starr changed her costume for that of a young farmer. Wearied by a long horseback ride, and weighed down by the weight of gold hidden in a chamois-skin belt which she wore, she reached with difficulty the town of Bonham. There she went to an inn and ordered supper, deciding to start out again that evening and travel all night. Meanwhile she fell asleep by the corner of the fireside, but suddenly a storm arose and wakened her, and there before her, sitting at the *table d' hôte*, the first person she saw was Judge Thurman, whom she knew by sight. He did not recognise her in her borrowed clothes, but during the entire meal the judge and his friends talked of nothing but the robbery that had been done to Wat Greyson, of James Reed, and of Belle Starr, who herself took part in the conversation. In vain the nervous innkeeper begged them to talk of something else. "Who knows if the walls have not ears? The vengeance of Belle Starr and her companions is implacable." They did not heed him, and passed the evening in predicting the certain capture of the fugitive. They were on her track; the

judge knew her, and he would expose her if he met her. Careful not to arouse suspicion by leaving the inn in so heavy a rain, Belle Starr gave up all thought of continuing her journey; but the hotel was full, the landlord said; beds were wanting, and the host suggested that Judge Thurman, who was very large, and the young farmer, who was slender and small, room together. Both agreed to this plan, Belle Starr with the most perfect indifference, and the night passed without the judge's having a shadow of suspicion.

At daybreak he was roused by the landlord, who said that the young man was about to leave and wanted to see him downstairs; he had something to tell him about Belle Starr. The judge dressed hurriedly, went down, and found the farmer equipped for riding.

"You are leaving early, young man."

"At once."

"And do you know where Belle Starr is?"

"Perfectly. Come near and look at me closely. I am Belle Starr, and you—you are an old fool! Last evening you said you would know me, no matter where or under what disguise; and you have eaten with me, roomed with me, and suspected nothing.

Dallas County should be proud of such a sharp-sighted judge. Go and boast of your knowledge, and take this to remember me by," she added, slashing his cheek with a vigorous blow of her whip as she put spurs to her horse. Belle Starr understood riding, and no one could overtake her.

Her adventures would fill a volume. Discovered at Younger Bend, where her retreat was made known, she escaped and reached San Diego, in southern California, alone and on horseback. Weary of her wandering life, she tasted there the charms of rest for a few months, but her love of adventure once more returned.

"I tried in vain to settle down to this new life," she says in her manuscript. "The remembrance of my past life haunted me. I thirsted for freedom, for movement and action. For a time I fought against these feelings, but at length I yielded to an impulse that drove me on. I read one day in the local paper that some races were to take place at Oakland—races for men and women. I wanted to go and try for the two prizes offered. I bought for $175 a superb black horse, which they let me have for this price as no one else dared to ride it, and I started for Oakland. It was while making this purchase that I met Charlie Boyd, then

well known in San Francisco. He went with me."

"'You have no idea of competing for the two prizes,' he said to me the evening before the race. I said yes, and asked him to get a closed carriage for me, so that I could change my costume without being seen. He did so, and I entered the track in the garb of a Mexican *caballero*, with long moustaches and a wide sombrero with a gold cord. At the given signal fourteen competitors presented themselves, but I alone attracted attention. The spirited behaviour of my horse and the boldness with which I managed him provoked shouts; everyone asked who the young Mexican was. I won the race, which was strongly disputed by a gray-haired Californian, an intrepid rider. He told me his name was William Carleton, and asked me mine; I said that I was William Lee of Loredo."

The race over, she slipped away and reached her cart, and reappeared in the dress of a woman, an Indian vest embroidered in silver, and in this new costume held the attention of all. On the same black horse she won this race without striking a blow.

"They all surrounded me, crowding about me, and congratulated me, overwhelming

me with compliments, but none was so urgent as William Carleton. In love with me at first sight, he asked me to marry him. I escaped as well as I could from his attentions, rejoined Charlie and the carriage, put on my first costume, and then left. No one for an instant suspected that the winners of the two races were one and the same, Belle Starr."

She returned to Texas again, and, being short of money, procured some at the expense of the State by "holding up," with the aid of James Reed, who had rejoined her, the stage-coach from San Antonio, which was carrying to the city the sum of $3000 for the government. They drained the travellers' pockets, and found $2150; but after this last exploit she was discovered with her companion while they were supping at an inn. She succeeded, however, in escaping, although wounded; but James Reed, less fortunate, was killed after a desperate resistance.

Belle Starr had many lovers among the desperadoes and outlaws of Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, and Nevada. Left a widow by Reed, she married Sand, son of a Cherokee Indian, whom she soon left after an expedition in which he was stupid enough to be caught. Belle thought little of stupid-

ity, and Sand had lost all prestige in her eyes. She then chose John Middleton and resumed with him her life of adventures; but, tracked by the police, Middleton tried to cross the Potomac River and was drowned. Then she married one Jim, a cousin of her third husband, and at last died, killed on the borders of Canada in an ambuscade. It was the death for which she had hoped, always having had, she said, a horror of dying in bed.

Strange as such a life may appear, and full as it is of wild incidents, of violent and brutal scenes and bizarre adventures, it is no more extraordinary or strange than that of many others. Amid peculiar surroundings, in the midst of rebels against society, she brought into relief some of the characteristic and salient traits of her race, traits exaggerated, but otherwise existing as latent germs. Belle Starr is in some respects the descendant of the settlers, of the frontier women, as intrepid as men, and as ready as they to fight the Indian or to use his stratagems. The type of another age, led astray in the nineteenth century, with a brain confused by the surroundings in which her youth was spent, at war with humanity, civilisation, and laws, she still proved the superiority of woman among the

outlaws who surrounded and followed her, obeying her wishes, deferential to her sex, subjugated by her audacity and beauty. Among other surroundings, in a different place, we shall find, though to a much less degree, and softened by education and civilisation, a love of independence, romantic tastes, a desire to rule, and a disdain, now concealed, of social conditions.

The study of some types of women in this curious American world will allow us to discover, apart from exaggerations of the hereditary instincts, favoured or repressed by circumstances, the actual tendencies of the modern American woman, refined by nature and surroundings, yet utterly unlike the European, from whom she is separated by a whole world of ideas, of instincts, and of traditions—a wider and deeper barrier than the ocean which rolls between the two worlds, and is obliterated by the steamers which now cross it in a few days.

## CHAPTER IV.

Money in American Society—Adaptability of the American Woman—Her Qualities and Her Defects—Various Types—Elizabeth Patterson—American Critics of American Women—The American Woman of To-day—Her Position and Her Influence.

### I.

After having in the preceding pages noted the various elements which help to make the modern American woman, we are interested in showing how, by birth and tradition, by nature and education, she was the absolute antithesis of the woman of the Orient, of whom the *Hitopadeça* says: "A woman should be under her father's care during her infancy, under her husband's during her girlhood, under her son's during her old age, and never independent." In the United States she is under no one's individual protection, but under that of everyone. We have shown by what countries, under what social conditions, and as the result of what religious and political crises, the colonies of the New World were peopled.

By the help of historical documents we have run over this colonial period as it was at the beginning; we have shown that man was absorbed by daily outdoor work, woman by household duties, and that the equality of the two sexes was the result of the equality of their duties and responsibilities; then, as prosperity grew, that woman's task became less important, while man's remained the same, the leisure of one being contrasted with the heavy labour of the other.

Her own intelligence has developed and broadened; that of man has become specialised and concentrated; his early education is limited, and remunerative work waits for him and claims him at an early age. As to woman, man's equal and companion from the start, little by little she has become his superior through the leisure which he has created for her and through the use which she has made of it, by intellectual culture, by her many and varied accomplishments, and by the stand which she knows how to take and to hold. She is the result of many circumstances which nowhere else are found united to such a degree, and all of which have contributed to make her the superior type of her race. In her are combined the characteristic traits which with man

are more special, and which therefore appear more accentuated, and more exaggerated, as well by the free play of natural instincts as by the necessity of making weapons of them in the struggle for existence, and of securing their full reward and practical utility. With the woman these characteristics exist, but they are softened and held in check; she rounds their angles, smooths their surfaces, and out of a dull pebble makes a precious gem; the constituent parts are the same, but a skilful cutting brings the brilliancy and the beauty of the stone into bold relief.

If we examine in detail these primitive elements which make a type of the citizen of the United States clearly distinct from the European of which he is the issue,—of the Anglo-Saxon and of the Dutchman, of the Irishman and the Frenchman, of the Spaniard and the German, of the Italian and of the Scandinavian,—whose blood mingles in his veins, we are surprised at the small part that heredity seems to have played in the formation of the race. The few traits that one finds here and there, and whose direct relation to one another can be demonstrated, seem to be allied and in juxtaposition; they depend but slightly on a central base; they break away from it

without an effort, and can disappear without changing the whole. On the other hand, nowhere is the influence of the motive power better comprehended and understood. So, as in a faithful mirror, one sees in the American, in his faults and in his character, in his thoughts and ideas, the influence of his native soil, of his climate, and of the early conditions of his existence. In this mirror appear the factors of which the powerful and constant play, sometimes excessive, has determined the superiority; just as in the case of a blacksmith one notes the abnormal development of the muscles of the arm, or as one marks the flexibility of an artist's hands, or the breadth of the shoulders of a wrestler.

In the first place, there is the will, persevering, persistent, the same to-day as it was yesterday and as it will be to-morrow. Having the work to do and the obstacles to overcome, this faculty entered first into play, with its inevitable merits and faults, of firmness and also of rigidity. The conditions of its *milieu* did not weaken it, the results obtained did not discourage it, but, on the contrary, they developed it, stimulated its activity, and better adapted the well-tempered implement to the strong hand of the workman. The aim, simple and

limited in the beginning, did not go beyond the material conditions of existence; but, this first goal reached, the horizon became widened, and ambition grew with acquired experience, with the means of freer action, and with the assured foundation, so that the object at last grew definite. In a democratic society as this was, thoroughly absorbed in the thoughts of purely material order, as is every growing society, this object could only be money.

They had eliminated rank and social distinction, caste and privilege; intellectual culture as yet existed only in exceptional cases; public employment was rare, and, being poorly paid, was little sought after. Neither by genius nor by arms could men rise, as was the case in the ancient republics: the only road leading from the crowd to the foremost rank was that of fortune, the natural and material result of labour and of will.

The citizens of the United States have often been reproached for their worship of the Almighty Dollar; but one has too often neglected to show that for them the dollar is above all a representative sign. With regard to their energy in winning wealth,—such an energy that with them the Jews could not gain a footing and would not know how to

prosper,—enough has not been said of the inexhaustible generosity of this people who were eager for gain largely because the gain was for a long time their only mark of success, the sole end toward which their ambition could strive. Notwithstanding the growing pre-eminence of material interests in Europe, we should have trouble in conceiving of a social organisation where money alone ruled. People are pleased to say that we have reached this; at heart we do not believe it, even while willingly repeating this pessimistic axiom. In France, more than elsewhere, we consider a great scholar, a great artist, a great writer, to be rich in all respects, however rich or poor materially he may be. Above wealth we place many things; in reality we consider so many qualities in our appreciation of others that their money is only a secondary consideration, and no one feels this more than those very ones to whom wealth is the only title to consideration. If in the United States, if in England, money has appeared to hold the first rank, it is because in the United States it was for many years the one criterion of success, it was because in England, where the limits of social consideration were accurately defined, money seemed the leveller of barriers, as the instrument of those who, starting from noth-

ing, aspired to be something. It has not been so since the barriers have been lowered, and since, by the setting to work of other faculties than that of making money, the man of energy and talent can open for himself better ways which harmonise with his natural desires, can leave the highway crowded by the mob, and reach his aim by different paths. In sketching in a series of articles published by the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and since collected into one volume, the history of the great fortunes in the United States and in England, we were forced to state how rarely the ruling passion for building up a colossal fortune has put in motion the higher faculties of those who have succeeded in so doing. Money has come to them by accumulation, by the very force of circumstances, but few, very few, of these founders of financial dynasties have had as their aim in life the accumulation of millions.

A problem to solve, an invention to introduce, an economic idea to launch, a new industry to create, a conquest to add to the common inheritance of humanity—these were the points of departure, the motive and the object. In attaining the latter they gained at the same time wealth; but for most of them wealth was only an aid, a tool, a means of giving wings to the will, of tri-

umphing over obstacles. Alone, by itself, wealth did not satisfy any of their highest aspirations; and those whom humanity will remember were prouder of the labour they had accomplished than of their piled up millions. It is too true that these high aims may be the lot of a particular few. It is no less true that, considering American society as a whole, the homage paid to money is not so universal as one might imagine, and that we must take into account this fact: that the rôle which money plays comes from this, that it alone proclaims the success whose importance is measured by its possession.

To those who denounce the so-called exclusive worship paid in the United States to the Almighty Dollar the moral and social ostracism which Jay Gould encountered, king of gold though he was, the one who still personifies the most mighty accumulation of capital in the hands of a single man, is an unanswerable reply. We know what this pirate financier was, in whom existed to an excess the two motives of which we speak, the implacable will power and the love of gold, for the accumulation of which his speculations could not win pardon even in his private virtues. Notwithstanding all this, this same man, who in 1869 threw the financial market of the United States into a frightful

panic in which twenty-seven of the largest banking-houses went down, dragging in their fall some hundreds of commercial firms, he who came out of this great fight "king of gold and of railroads," this unmoved speculator whom nothing daunted, not even the tragic death of the friends whom he sacrificed, was kind and gentle to his family, simple in his tastes, irreproachable in his morals, and one who bowed his head in resignation before the ostracism which smote him. He died without knowing why he was hated and despised. He felt the scorn and suffered from it, but it had no effect upon him. He sought neither to conquer it nor to overwhelm it by his millions, which he was unable even to enjoy. The human heart has strange mysteries. This redoubtable financier, this master of money whose one word revolutionised the New York Stock Exchange, knew misery and bravely bore it. This cold calculator, whom neither threats nor prayers ever moved, was hesitating and timid before the woman he loved. His few letters, which we have at hand, show him in such a light that one asks whether he is the same man, and by what strange contrast such incongruous feelings could exist in one inexplicable individuality. Gould was, in his way, a representative man, a characteristic type, in certain

marked respects of that which the will and the desire can produce when these unbalanced instincts are let loose without any restraint from surroundings favourable to their full development. He was also a living proof of the fact that gold does not stand quite supreme in the United States, and that public opinion does not bow like a slave before those who possess it, even when they join to its envied possession private virtues such as one rarely sees in mere money makers. Because of these various standards the man himself is worth describing, and their contrasts also are worthy of note.

In his youth, anxious to learn and conscious of his ignorance, this farmer's son rose at four o'clock on winter mornings to study mathematics. At the age of fifteen he travelled as a land surveyor, poorly clad, without money, small, thin, wretched, going, however, as many as sixty miles a day. He writes in these words to one of his friends (he had friends then) the touching story of his misery, of his trials, of his failures and his persistent labour:

"I had nothing; that is to say, everything I possessed in the world consisted of a dime, with which I was determined not to part. The winter was approaching, and despair was gaining on me. If tears could

have filled an empty purse, mine would have indeed been full. Weakness and hunger were telling on me cruelly, when a farmer stopped me, and, knowing that I was a surveyor, asked me to dine with him, and in the afternoon survey his field. With what joy did I accept, having eaten nothing but a hard biscuit the night before, and being hardly able to stand upright. After dinner I did the work. He asked me what he owed me. 'Nothing,' I answered, thinking myself sufficiently paid by the dinner which had saved my life. But he insisted, and made me accept half a dollar, saying that his neighbour had paid twice as much a few days before for the same work. The discovery of a new world could not have made me happier than did this half dollar. I felt myself rich, having something with which to supply myself with food for two days, and it was with revived spirits that I left him. He spoke of me to other farmers, who employed me, and at the end of my stay I had actually six dollars in my pocket."

Ten years later he had $150,000. Stopping once in New York, he chanced to pass the Everett House, one of the large hotels of the city. At one of the windows he saw a young girl, whose regular features, sweet manner, and appearance of goodness charmed him.

From that time Miss Miller often met in the hotel parlours or at table this young man, whose eyes followed her everywhere, but who, silent and timid, hesitated to begin a conversation with her father or approach her. A chance occurrence accomplished what he dared not do, and several months later Miss Miller became Mrs. Gould. She did not regret it, for never was any husband more faithful and affectionate. Jay Gould's most bitter slanderers have always done justice to the purity of his morals and the rectitude of his private life. After his marriage he established himself in New York, and commenced in Wall Street his phenomenal career. In 1870 he was the richest man in the United States, and perhaps in the whole world. The terrible panic on the Exchange in March, 1869, his taking possession of the lines of the Erie, the Saratoga, and of the Western Union, the great rise in Pacific Railroad shares, made him the best known and the most hated personage in the United States.

Two men had predicted from the beginning Jay Gould's astonishing capacity and limitless cupidity. One, John B. Alley, a Member of Congress, said of him, when he was only twenty-four years old, and after half an hour's conversation with him : "I

never want to do business with Gould; he is the only man I ever met who makes me feel afraid." Vanderbilt, who understood men, wrote at the same time to one of his friends: "I met one Jay Gould; remember his name; he will succeed; but he has in him the making of a bandit." One of his few, very few friends, has made an exact portrait of him. He shows the complex physiognomy, the double individuality, of his subject; the mixture of sobriety and cupidity, the sweetness of disposition and the indomitable will, the simplicity of tastes and the immeasurable ambition, the courtesy and the cynicism, which characterise this strange individuality. This portrait, like that by Mr. Poultney Bigelow, sketched in the *Speaker*, throws a new light upon this strange nature. With the aid of these documents, and of some letters in which the true man reveals himself, we can reach the constituent elements and the various factors which set in motion this powerful intelligence, which carried so high the fortune and placed so low the name of Jay Gould.

A weak and sickly body, an inflexible will, a wonderful foresight, a faultless memory, and a faculty of abstraction which, in a crisis, allowed him to isolate himself, indifferent to external panic, to clamour, and to

threats, absorbed in his combinations and calculations—such he was in 1869, directing from his private office his formidable operations, fearlessly planning his evolutions on the most treacherous soil, as calm as a checker player, having foreseen everything, calculated everything, and made sure of his result. He was, as we have said, short, thin, and taciturn. He had a jet-black beard, hair, and eyes, regular features, a high and massive forehead. Of quiet manners and few gestures, unmoved and cold in business and in public, at heart he was affectionate, and no cares or anxieties ever crossed his threshold. With his family he was always sweet and amiable; with strangers he was invariably courteous and perfectly self-possessed; and this weak body had nerves of iron and an ever-lucid brain. At the time of his start in life he had to fight with misery, but he did not fear it, convinced that if it were to happen again he should know the reason. From his contact with wretchedness and his victory over it a mournful conviction remained to him: that wealth was for the strongest and the cleverest, and that everything was permissible in order to attain it. Son of a countryman, he nevertheless held in great esteem superiority of birth, of knowledge, of position. He en-

vied them, and admired them from a distance, without daring to pretend to them, for he did not consider that gold took their place. A parvenu, he remained humble before that which he knew he was unable to buy or pay for, recognising that he was different from those whom he considered socially his superiors, and who scorned to treat him as an equal. He understood nothing of the ostracism of which he was the object, of the repulsion his name and the methods by which he had built his colossal fortune inspired. He knew that he kept within the laws. Had he not bought the expounders of them, had he not paid the judges and witnesses, and bribed the press, giving, as he did in 1873, a check for ten thousand dollars to the editor of a paper to suppress a paragraph of several lines directed against him?

Mr. Bigelow relates as follows the one interview which he had with Jay Gould. It confirms what we say. "Chance," he says, "brought about our meeting. A friend, whose country seat was next to Jay Gould's, and with whom I was spending a few days, invited me to take a trip on the Hudson in his steam yacht. We were waiting at the wharf when Jay Gould arrived. He was going to the same place as ourselves, but his

yacht was not ready. Although my friend did not know him, seeing him in difficulty, he offered to take him on board his yacht. It was an act of ordinary courtesy, which demanded nothing further, and during the trip he abstained from talking with him. As for me, I had not the same reasons, being only a temporary guest in the place, and I began a conversation with this man, of whom I had heard so much and so often. We talked for some time of everything except the Exchange, and I was strongly impressed by the social isolation in which Gould seemed to have lived. A child could not have questioned me as greedily as did he about unknown countries, about Europe, its institutions, its customs. He questioned me as a man does who seeks to corroborate facts previously learned, but which he doubts. He spoke of well-known people and places, but he pronounced their names hesitatingly, as though they were not familiar to him. His questions betrayed a naïve ignorance of all that the world knows, and those which he asked me about the rôle and the attributes of a Prime Minister of England were like those one would ask a traveller just arrived from the heart of Asia about the position and functions of the Grand Lama. Everything that had not to

do with the one aim of his life seemed to him a hidden science or something reserved for scholars. And, nevertheless, the man impressed me by the breadth and depth of some of his thoughts, by an intellectual superiority which was reflected in the quiet simplicity of his language. For two hours he held me under this impression, and I could not help comparing his position in the financial world with his absence of every pretension, with the tact with which he avoided those subjects which he understood better than anyone, and the marvellous comprehension with which he grasped all that was said to him."

He lived then in a splendid residence at Irvington-on-the-Hudson, as well known as is Washington Irving, whose modest villa he had bought, enlarged, and beautified. Every day he came to New York, leaving in the morning, returning at night, by an express train which the railway company had arranged purposely for him, and of which his neighbours had the benefit. They were almost all rich bankers or merchants, and had a special parlour car for themselves, to which their little aristocracy alone had access. Jay Gould asked them to let him share it. They refused, and this made him painfully sensitive. He resigned

himself, however, without a word. Everywhere about him he met with this ostracism, which hurt him without making him indignant. He attributed it to his low birth and to his ignorance of the usages of the world. It was done, he thought, to the common and envied parvenu, not to the evil speculator, and as to that he had nothing to say. He had no desire, however, to answer the insolence of scorn by the insolence of his wealth. He could have done it, but he did not attempt it. By taste, by nature, he was simple, loving neither ostentation nor display. In New York he lived in a palace, in the country in a villa, because his fortune demanded it, because others, much less rich than he, lived so, and he did not wish to be odd. But palace and villa were closed; the world did not have access to them, and would not have gone there in any case. He understood this, and avoided the insult of being refused, asking himself naïvely why he had deserved it. An indefatigable worker, he was gifted with marvellous aptitude, and few human brains were as powerfully organised as his. He left nothing to chance, and kept in his vast memory a whole world of definite information and carefully classified facts.

"This man is a sorcerer," said of him

once a large Western proprietor, who had unexpectedly come to submit to him a project for certain branch lines, which would increase the value of an immense tract of land still uncultivated for want of roads connecting it with the Pacific Railway. Gould received him and listened to the end; then, taking up each argument in succession, setting aside some, and approving others, he marked the distances, the turns, and the planes, the artificial work necessary, and the embankments, and showed himself so complete a master of the subject that the narrator of the story added: "I have lived in this region for twenty-five years, and I thought I knew it better than any man living, but Jay Gould proved that he had known it one hundred times longer than I. Not an error in his assertions, his calculations, or figures,—I have since verified them,—and where his estimates differed from mine, where I thought they were faulty, it was I who was wrong, and he who was right, although he did not know of my coming, and was not told in advance of my proposed visit, or of what I wished to talk with him about."

We have often heard of his office in Wall Street. It was, in its way, a curiosity. It united all that modern comfort, the most

careful forethought, and science could put at the service of a man who had unlimited capital, who had every reason to fear for his life, and whom neither time nor distance hindered in the carrying out of his commands. The latter were registered by stenographers; special wires brought and carried them; special telephones permitted instant correspondence with his brokers. Iron doors, covered with hangings, a suite of rooms occupied by secretaries, clerks, detectives, like so many posts of inspection, were obstacles to the criminal attempts with which he was constantly threatened in anonymous letters. More than once he might have fallen a victim to them.

In 1882 a strange thing happened in his office. From the year 1880 on, numerous enemies had attacked him venomously, forcing him to strain his credit. There was a report that Jay Gould was in danger, that he was converting everything into money to meet his losses; some articles skilfully inserted in the newspapers heightened the effect of such reports, and they increased. The fall of the money king, they said, was only a question of time. But that which but moderately affected public opinion, and but feebly moved the money market when other questions arose, became very serious

when that of the great regulator of the money market was mentioned,—his ruin would involve numberless others with it,—so that, from every portion of the Union, telegrams poured in upon Gould, anxious, desperate, threatening. It was necessary for him to act and to end the panic. He called a meeting in his office of the prominent bankers of New York and some of the editors of the principal newspapers. In a few words he explained to them the situation, asking them to be the judges of it. By his orders his private secretary opened one of the safes and placed on the table a bundle of papers and certificates of stock receipts. Jay Gould asked those present to proceed to an inventory of the first bundle of papers. The total was fifty-three million dollars.

"And now, gentlemen," he said, "we will, if you please, verify the amount in coin, the sums now due me, the government bonds, and my current accounts."

The result of the inventory revealed a condition that they could scarcely believe—the fact that his personal income at that time exceeded twelve million dollars. Russell Sage had been right when, questioned a few days before in regard to the reports, he had answered: "There is not a word of truth in them. Gould could not possibly

reach the limit of his income. I do not believe his annual expenses amount to two million dollars, and he should be able to set aside eight or ten millions every year." On the following day the New York papers told in full of this visit to Aladdin's palace. Nothing more was necessary to stop the panic.

Jay Gould lost his wife in 1889, and from that time on he seemed heart-broken. This cold speculator dearly loved his family, and especially the faithful companion whom the world did not know, and whose husband's name closed to her the doors of drawing-rooms. There were two men in Gould—the Irvington Gould, and the Gould of Wall Street; his wife knew only the former, and was devoted to him to the last. For her and with her he was the husband, the affectionate head of the family, who left his business at his office, with his terrible greed for gain, his implacable will, his cruel hardness of heart.

His wife dead, he left Wall Street for Irvington, where she no longer was, but where everything spoke of her. For his love of gold he substituted a love of the flowers that she, too, had loved. He enlarged his conservatories, which he made the largest in the world; he finished his

grove of palms, valued at more than a million dollars, and completed his collection of orchids and of rare plants, for which he spent no end of money. In this way he managed to exist, surrounded by his two sons and his two daughters, until death came.

"The man had good qualities," writes Bigelow. His private life was pure, and he was generous without ostentation. Had he lived twenty years longer, his faults would, perhaps, have been forgotten. He would have opened his doors to those very persons whom we have seen begging invitations from the plutocratic Vanderbilts. The papers would have spoken of him in terms worthy of a millionaire philanthropist; like others he would have bought for cash the social notoriety which one wrongly confounds with respect. "Jay Gould is dead," writes the New York *Herald*, "not as he expected to die, from an assassin's blow, but as a man who falls asleep, surrounded by his children, in the room where his wife breathed her last. As a private individual, criticism cannot touch him; he was an irreproachable husband and father. As a public man he was the world's most detestable example. No one envied his success, for he paid too dearly for it. A financier by nature, a spec-

ulator without a rival, he was also unequalled in his sovereign indifference to the consequences of his acts. He has left countless millions and a great moral lesson. His wealth will go to his heirs; but to those who are tempted to envy him or to imitate his example it seems as though a voice from the tomb cried: 'Stop! do not do as I have done.' Whatever we may say, the world is fair and just; in its eyes honour is worth more than all else. And the world has judged Gould and has condemned him."

There is no more leniency in the United States than in Europe for ill-gotten gains, large though they may be. It is wrong, however, from this fact, to deny that this leniency may be found to a greater degree in the United States than elsewhere, or to deny that the influence of money is less there than elsewhere. Such as it is, this influence is excessive; it is less the result of the transmission of ideas than the lack of any counterbalance to establish in public opinion a proper equilibrium.

We have shown above how the persistent pursuit of money, the one proof of success, is incompatible with intellectual culture, how the latter became the aim of the women, as wealth was that of their fathers and husbands, and how by this fact

women advanced beyond the men and won prestige in the eyes of the latter. In the modern American women we find developed in another direction the characteristic traits that we have described: the will, the energy of a race of settlers; and the taste for getting money has been transformed into a taste for spending it. The woman of the United States is, we have said, the means of spending, as man is the means of getting; the luxury of the one announces the success of the other. But as the conditions of actual life change, as the conditions of new countries disappear, in which everything is and seems to be possible, as careers become embarrassed, and as the chances for rapid wealth decrease, other ideas arise, other factors enter into play, the slow and continued operation of which suffices to change the earlier conceptions and to lessen whatever there is in them, excessive or *outré*. The originality of the race suffers, perhaps, from this, but its active forces will accomplish none the less for being curbed and disciplined. In any case the American woman loses nothing by it, and especially the young girl; far from decreasing, her influence grows; she makes herself strongly felt in Europe, even in France, where by the fact of traditions, customs, and morals

she appears as the first among revolutionary elements, changing rapidly our ideas on the education of a young girl, while her independence and liberty arouse at once our envy and astonishment.

A few years ago several women of high position met in one of the waiting-rooms of the German Empress. Stopping in Berlin, they had begged the favour of an audience, through their respective ambassadors, and a letter from the Grand Chamberlain had appointed a day and hour when the Empress would receive them. They did not know one another; English, Russian, Austrian, Italian, the chances of travel had thrown them together for the first time. The hour for the reception passed, and the sovereign did not appear. Addressing one of her neighbours, one of the ladies expressed her surprise at the delay, excusing her impatience by the fact that, as an American, she was not familiar with court etiquette.

The other replied smilingly that she, too, was an American by birth, but had lately married an Austrian nobleman. The others drew near, entered into conversation, and were amazed to find that all six were from the Western States or from New England. This singular and significant fact proves what we have said of England, where a

number of historical titles are to-day borne by American women. It is the same in France, in Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy, and it is not only among the aristocracy that these marriages occur, but in the upper and middle classes. We Europeans have often taken this as a text to joke more or less on the taste of the American women for distinctions of nobility, and on their inconsistency in priding themselves on their republican institutions while at the same time boasting of their monarchical titles. But apart from the fact that they are not the only ones who act thus, these are in reality only the exceptions. These marriages become more frequent every year in every large city of the Continent, and introduce a new social element, the influence of which is more and more felt, and is explained by considerations of a more general kind. If there is no country in the world where the young girl, protected by the respect of all, enjoys so much independence and liberty as in the United States, and occupies in her family and in the world so prominent a position, however much praised, courted, flattered, and free in her choice, this royalty exists only for a time, and a short time. The brilliant public life of the American girl ceases, as a rule, on her wedding day,

and the French girl, who is disconcerted by the flirting, by the wise strategy, by the independence of the other's manner and speech, hardly recognises her in her new rôle of married woman. Yet she does not give it up without regret. She resigns herself with difficulty to the married life, so quiet, by comparison, after having been the belle of the drawing-rooms. Then the American woman secretly envies the foreign lady, whom she had eclipsed for several years, but whom marriage frees at the same time as it fetters herself.

To add to the advantages in the life of an American girl those of the married woman in Europe is an enticing ideal, and it suffices to explain the frequent marriages which the Americans make upon the Continent. It explains also the rapid Americanisation of Europe, the progress which the influence and the example of the United States are making in our customs, in our educational ideas concerning young girls, and in the degree of greater liberty they enjoy every day.

But Europe in its turn reacts upon America; civilisation is the result of such contacts as these; and now for several years past we can note in the higher classes in the United States a tendency to adopt some of the

European ideas regarding the privileges of married women. On this road they cannot, however, travel far, on account of the difficulty of taking away from young girls an ascendency consecrated by a century of possession, and by a swarm of habits, customs, and traditions. If changes occur, it will be due to another order of ideas, as we shall explain below, in showing the characteristic change which takes place on the subject under discussion, and already negatively treated, that of the *dot*.

Like every essentially progressive race, the American is eminently adaptable; it has kept neither the rigidity nor the prejudices of the English. If American men accommodate themselves to the life of Paris, London, or Florence, if they easily conform to different conditions of life and surroundings, American women are still more cosmopolitan. Europe charms them, attracts them, and holds them by its intellectual and artistic culture, by its historical associations, and also by its relative cheapness and its less costly pleasures. One has to live a long time in American surroundings, where nothing appeals to the imagination, where the past dates from yesterday, where the actual cost of living is expensive and the labour incessant, where time is money and where one

must economise, in order fully to appreciate our artistic enjoyments, our museums and our galleries, our monuments and the memories which they evoke, our great cities, every stone of which has its own history. All this is so much a part of ourselves that we imagine ourselves *blasés* at the attractions before us, and do not appreciate them until we have been separated from them for a time. Yet this for quick and active imaginations has a powerful attraction, and you will easily distinguish in the Court of the Louvre, in the Uffizi at Florence, the Campo Santo at Pisa, and the Coliseum at Rome, the American woman from the English, by the admiring and contemplative look of the former, and by the absent-minded glance of the latter, turning over the leaves of her Baedeker. The one gazes, the other reads up; one has impressions, the other reminiscences.

As is the English, so is the American woman the daughter of Europe, and neither time nor distance has lessened in her the culture of the past. She is more attached to it the farther she gets away from it, because her memory is less burdened by dates and facts, and because, in turning over the pages of history, she satisfies a curiosity aroused by the traditions that are preserved in books. Surely, neither the Seine nor the Thames,

nor the Po nor the Arno recalls the Mississippi, which rolls its turbid waters for over 1800 miles; it would take 160 Lake Lemans to equal the surface of Lake Superior, and the summit of even Mont Blanc does not reach to the height of the topmost point of the Rocky Mountains; but the American woman does not forget that among these limited surroundings great things are accomplished; if the theatre is smaller, the actor appears larger. This remarkable fascination which Europe has for the Americans, and especially for the American woman, is not a recent thing, any more than the varied causes of this attraction are new. The study of certain types, taken at different times, will better exhibit in their proper light with the American woman's faculty of adaptability, the good and bad qualities inherent in the race, and in the subject we are studying. There are representative women as well as representative men, and the history of one of the women—a history which mingles with our own, and which her letters allow us to reconstruct—will show us, better than any general observations, the attraction which these surroundings have for women; it will also bring into relief the two primitive elements in her which we have noted in the man, in whom they attain their

maximum intensity: on the one hand an energetic will, and on the other, the love of money.

## II.

On the 4th of April, 1878, Elizabeth Patterson, the lawful but repudiated wife of Jerome Bonaparte, ex-king of Westphalia, died at the age of ninety-three years. Her beauty, her undeserved misfortunes, her sharp and bitter spirit, and the events of her life give her a place in the history of her times. Born in Baltimore, February 6, 1785, Elizabeth Patterson began life under the most favourable circumstances. From the age of fifteen her great beauty was celebrated far beyond the little city in Maryland. Her father, a clever and upright merchant, held the first position among the merchants of Baltimore. She was eighteen years old when in 1803 Jerome Bonaparte, brother of the First Consul, visited New York, and at Commodore Barney's invitation went to Baltimore. There at an entertainment given in his honour he met Elizabeth Patterson and fell in love with her at first sight.

He was young, in love, and surrounded by that aureole of glory which crowned the name of Bonaparte. Three months later their

civil marriage was performed before the consul of France, and a religious marriage by the Bishop of Baltimore. We know that this marriage was not recognized by the Emperor, and was arbitrarily annulled in 1805, and that Prince Jerome married in 1807 Princess Frederica of Wurtemberg. We know, too, with what energy and perseverance Elizabeth Patterson defended her rights and those of her son Jerome Napoleon. Forced to bow before the all-powerful will of her brother-in-law, before her desertion and her husband's second marriage she suppressed her tears and anger. The victim of politics and a state policy which raised her husband to the rank of kings, and drove her without title or civil position to Baltimore, into an obscurity which was hateful to her, Elizabeth Patterson had to submit, but she never became resigned. Deceived in her dreams of love and ambition, she centred in her son all her hopes of greatness. Jerome had his father's name and a future before him; a day would come when altered fortune would repair the wrongs done to Elizabeth Patterson, and when her son would return to her what his father had taken away by submitting to his brother's orders.

For twenty-five years she lived in this hope, following with attention the events

of which Europe was the theatre, standing aloof, a powerless yet not disinterested onlooker at the prodigious growth of the Empire, at its perilous success, at its reverses, and finally at its fall. The Emperor's despotic will cut her off from access to the Court, a cruel privation for a woman who thought she was called there to play a great rôle. Ingenious in converting her tastes into duties, she said to herself that there alone was her place, her true sphere, and that the future of Jerome Napoleon, the Emperor's nephew, a king's son, imperiously demanded a rich and powerful alliance. She caressed this hope, striving in every possible way to awaken ambition in her son, in whom her own rebellion, her bitterness, and her hopes found not the slightest echo. In her letters we can penetrate the deep irritation which at last ended in apathy. She was so thoroughly identified with the rôle which circumstances refused her, yet of which her imagination dreamed, that she spoke, acted, and wrote as a deposed sovereign, haughtier and prouder in adversity even than in prosperity.

In spite of everything and everybody, she gained the society of the Imperial family, but was rejected, persecuted, and repudiated by the Emperor. She extolled his genius to the clouds during his prosper-

ity and defended his memory after his death.

With her husband it was different. She refused the title of Princess of Schmalcalden and a dowry of two hundred thousand francs from the hand of the King of Westphalia, but accepted a modest pension from the Emperor. To her husband, who complained at having his offers rejected and those of his brother accepted, she wrote: "I prefer to hide under an eagle's wing rather than hang from the beak of a gosling." Later when he suggested a home in Westphalia: "Your kingdom is large," she proudly replied, "but not large enough for two queens." A Frenchwoman by marriage, she was also a Frenchwoman at heart. No trace remained of her American origin or her family affection. She abjured both nationality and family; she wished to forget them, to make those about her forget them, particularly her son, whom she took to Geneva, to finish his education. It was a strange choice, for she wished him to be a Catholic, "the only religion possible," she wrote, "for princes and kings." She herself was a Protestant, but to so small a degree that it is not worth mentioning. To her intense passion for greatness, she added that of economy; we

shall see, later, how far she carried the latter. At Geneva she flattered herself that she need spend but little. We have tried the same thing; she asserted the fact, at least, and avenged herself by one of those unjust remarks which are familiar with her: "Have you noticed," she wrote her father, "that there are no Jews at Geneva? What could they do there? They would die of hunger; one Genevese is worth four Jews." Regarding her family she was ungovernable. She never pardoned them for having condemned her marriage, any more than for the reception they gave her when she returned to Baltimore after her marriage was broken. Wounded in her love, exasperated in her pride, she found but little sympathy from them. Their advice to give up her dreams of greatness, and to shut herself up in the quiet, monotonous life of a little American city, however wise it might have been, served only to intensify her regrets and increase her bitterness.

The Emperor's marvellous success, the rapid rise of her husband, glory, kingdoms conquered at racing speed, the brilliant assemblage of sovereign allies conquered or deposed—all these echoes of a world from which she was excluded and in the midst of which she considered herself called to live,

made her more intolerant and more bitter, more disdainful and scornful. On the fall of the Empire she went to live in Florence, and we find her there in 1829. Jerome Napoleon was then twenty-four years old. Without ambition, but with good sense, he preferred to the wandering life of an adventurer in Europe the quiet of his native city, and a simple life, yet one worthy of his grandfather. Yielding to his prayers, for he influenced her by his strong will, his mother at length allowed him to return to Baltimore; as to her following him she did not dream of it. She stayed in Florence, entirely absorbed by her idea of making a marriage for her son that should be worthy of the name he bore. Already, in 1826, she had hoped to marry him to his cousin Charlotte, daughter of Joseph Bonaparte, and whom she describes in no very flattering terms. "A hideous little creature, and having the disposition of a devil." It is true that when she spoke thus the marriage project had come to naught, Princess Charlotte evincing a very strong liking for another suitor. It is necessary to add that the marriage negotiations were dragged out to a great length. Mme. Bonaparte had charged one of her friends of the Rothschild house to make minute inquiries as to

Joseph's fortune. "They spoke," she said, "of a *dot* of 3,500,000 francs: for myself, I did not believe it, but I had decided not to give Jerome for less than a million, in cash. They shall not deceive me with promises and hopes." When the needed information arrived, it was too late. "Moreover," she added, "it was not satisfactory."

She looked elsewhere and thought she had reached the goal of her efforts when, early in September, 1829, she received a letter from her father announcing Jerome Napoleon's engagement to Miss Williams, daughter of a Baltimore merchant, and that the marriage would take place in October. This news destroyed all dreams for the future; it was the ruin of her last hope; after the father, the son had betrayed her. Then one sees in her letters that had she been able to break the union, as the Emperor had broken hers, she would not have hesitated to take the most arbitrary measures against whose illegality in her own case she had been fighting for a quarter of a century. Her answer to her father was a cry of despair. Were she on her death-bed, she said, in suffocating agony, God would, by a miracle, give her power to protest against the marriage. Never with her consent should Jerome marry an American. Napoleon's nephew, she said, had no

equal in America. In England he could choose a woman from the most aristocratic families. Had she not herself had twenty chances to make a rich marriage and she had refused, for how could she marry with the name she carried? "God knows," she wrote, "if I hate poverty and isolation, I have accepted both, and neither has broken my pride or made me bend my will to the point of accepting a husband of inferior position. I will never consent to my son's marrying Miss Williams or any other American miss. The marriage has not yet taken place; let him invent any pretext whatever. Above all, let no one speak to me of the rhapsodies of love and passion. Do I not know with what ease men and women dispose of love, and that only imbeciles remain chained by these pretended bands, and marry for something else besides a great fortune or high position?"

Is this the woman who in 1803 answered thus the remonstrances of her father on the occasion of her marriage: "I love Jerome Bonaparte, and I would rather be his wife, if only for one day, than make the happiest marriage in the world."

Since then it is true that twenty-six years had passed, and her letters tell us that La Rochefoucauld was her prayer-book. Again

she says: "I am convinced that an immense fortune is better for a woman than high position; yet still this fortune must really be immense to excuse a *mésalliance.* And what are these fortunes in Baltimore, and what is this large family of Williams? I myself at my age would never marry an American, however rich he were, and surely my son has a right to look higher than I. If Miss Williams had five hundred thousand dollars, and if Jerome could bring her away from America, never to return, I might perhaps yield," and so forth. This was in 1829, and five hundred thousand dollars meant two million and a half francs. Even at this price she hesitated; but Miss Williams' *dot* was an income of about six thousand dollars in her own name, and which in case of her death did not revert to her husband.

Moreover, she understood women, especially American women, she wrote her father. "In every country in the world women are endowed with a marvellous instinct and know how to manage men. In America they are more tactful than anywhere else, and they are one century in advance as far as strategy is concerned. If my son were to die, his wife would have only one thought—to marry again, and my son's children would be dependent on their step-

father." How could her father have let Jerome venture on such a chance? Did he not know her wishes, her desires, so often and so distinctly expressed, her hatred for America and American women? If Jerome were put to it by necessity—but he was not; surely she had but little money, yet the amount she gave him and the twelve hundred dollars income from her family were enough to live on. "I am covetous, I know," she wrote, "but the love of money which I carry so far never made me lose sight of my son's interests. On the contrary, was it not I who dragged from the Bonapartes this income of twelve hundred dollars, which still continues, and which they would have stopped before now had not the fear of what they are pleased to call my infernal tongue restrained them? Is it not due to me that he obtained a legacy of four thousand dollars from his aunt the Princess Borghese?"

We see that Elizabeth Patterson had no high opinion of American women. She refers again to her son in a letter dated October 17th. If this marriage takes place in spite of her resistance and remonstrances, she expresses the desire that at least Jerome may not bring his wife to Europe. "Here," she said, "it is a well-known fact that the

Americans who come here turn out badly." To every rule there is an exception, and if she set small value on her fellow-country-women, she thought very differently of herself. "My ambition, my beauty, my intelligence, never had their proper surroundings in America. After my marriage it was evident to all who were interested in me that my true place was in Europe. I could not live elsewhere. Providence did not endow me with that mixture of imbecility and narrow-mindedness without which life in Baltimore is impossible. You are right if you think I shall never return to America if this marriage occurs. Certainly I shall prefer to live among strangers. Here, at least, they consider me a woman of good sense and determination. In America you treat me like an old fool, of no use except to darn stockings and mutter prayers. Here I am consulted in the most delicate affairs, yet you think me incapable of deciding the questions which are nearest my heart." Her hatred for the United States was a passion unequalled save by her love of Europe. "Happy country!" she said, "where women are never treated like old fools!" On this subject she waxes eloquent. "In the European courts," she wrote her father, "the terms 'old man' and 'old woman' are banished from the dic-

tionary. Women of forty or fifty years marry under as advantageous circumstances as silly young girls of sixteen. I have seen them marry men of all ages, even those younger than themselves."

Florence, where she then lived, was the elegant haven for victims of the triumphant coalition. The great changes which had once more upset Europe, overthrown an empire, established a monarchy in France, and restored in Italy deposed dynasties, had also overthrown lives. Diplomats without employment, great dignitaries without insignia of office, discontented ones waiting for a new day and the changes it would bring, went to seek in Italy a less expensive home under a happy climate. Men formed conspiracies, but did not act; intrigued, slandered the visitors of the day among themselves, and took their revenge in jokes on adverse fortune.

Mme. Bonaparte was held to the vanquished by the name she bore, and by her broken alliance; by her friendships and her bitterness she was attached to the victors; thus she was on both sides. At the age of forty-four she was still very beautiful, and Baron Bernstetten could say without flattery, but not without fatuity: "If she is not the Queen of Westphalia, she is at least the

queen of our hearts." It is true that he added: "Her eyes attract us, but her tongue drives us away."

In the midst of this elegant, witty, and frivolous society she was in her true element, admired, respected, but especially feared by all, following up with equal obstinacy her ambitious dreams and her notions of economy. In her letters to her father she gives a curious picture of this strange life. She sees that the hated marriage is about to take place, that her efforts are powerless to prevent it, and suddenly she turns about. Yet on no account must he bring to her her daughter-in-law; upon this condition she will use all her efforts toward the continuance of the twelve hundred dollars income which the Bonaparte family gave the son. They would not dare refuse it; they fear too much her bitter words. Then she added: "They know well enough there is not a single ball or *soirée* given in Florence without me. They know that I am on an intimate footing with all the foreign ministers, that I miss no court reception, and they esteem me highly. There is not one distinguished person of whatever nationality whom I do not know, and who will not do me any favour. My days and nights are spent in society." Then she modifies her plans for the future; for whom

and for what should she continue to economise any more? "I will spend my income, I will buy wood to burn and candles; I will have better food, and will be more comfortable than I have ever been before. I have deprived myself of everything, going without fires in the winter, economising in lights, and ordering my scanty dinner from the wineshop. I will buy books and I will subscribe to magazines instead of borrowing them from the neighbouring café. I will put an end to this sordid system of economy which I have imposed on myself. I will have a dinner such as others have. I will no longer be compelled to write my letters on the blank sheets of those that I receive; I will have paper of my own on which to write to friends."

We can judge from these details what her life must have been. Pride and worldly love have their voluntary martyrs, and let us not be deceived. Her dominating characteristic at this time was avarice and love of society. At first maternal ambition, the wish for a great marriage for her son, had been the principal motives. She economised and pinched herself that his fortune might be large, and so help his chances of a brilliant marriage; later she economised for the sake of economising. "Money," she said, "is

the only reliable friend," but avarice and the need of society carried her beyond bounds. "I do not understand life," she wrote on October 27th, 1829, "outside of the courts and in the company of great personages. I must go into society every day. I consider it more sensible to pass one's time at balls and dinners than to spend it as do the American women, in having children, the only possible distraction at Baltimore. If I had a daughter, I would rather introduce her at court, and let her dance every evening in good society, than to see her married to a penniless man, and giving to the world poor little devils who would curse their very existence. I hate mediocrity and the so-called domestic hearth. When I was compelled to live in America, the idea of suicide entered my head, but courage failed me. I have sacrificed everything to ambition: you know it; how can you think, then, that I could ever approve of my son's marrying in Baltimore?"

The English novelist and humourist William Makepeace Thackeray, in his *Newcomes*, has perfectly described this type of an ambitious and worldly woman, whom even age is powerless to call back to the realities of life, who understands life only in the midst of courts and intrigues, always

on exhibition, measuring her importance by the number and quality of her relations, and dying, like Lady Kew, on the field of honour—that is to say, in a drawing-room, where Death touched her with his finger and said: "Let us go; the hour is come."

In reading these letters of Elizabeth Patterson one cannot help thinking that she was really predestined to live among these surroundings, and that she would have played the rôle of sovereign as well and perhaps better than many others, with conviction and not without grandeur. Haughty in prosperity, she would have been inflexible in adversity, energetic in resistance. She would not have bowed before misfortune; she would not have bent her head even before destiny. With what calm serenity this American woman judges from her point of view both her son and the imperial family from which she is cut off! "I hope to live," she wrote, "to see Jerome make a name in the world and live with great people. He has no ambition, he is without energy; he is a rock of Sisyphus, which I have tried in vain to roll to the summit. You must have noticed that he has none of the qualities which make men aspire to a high rank. I knew it, and I saw it; but my mother-love drove me to

fight against all evidence and his puling nature. For years I tried everything to make a superior man of him, to inspire in him sentiments worthy of the nephew of the greatest genius the world has ever seen. This great man left to his relations only a great name. Genius, ambition, will power —he carried them all with him to his tomb; not a spark of one survived. The Bonapartes are a mean family, without high ambitions, mediocre in everything, condemned to the obscurity of a purely animal life, good only for living well, to be reproduced, and to decay." Twenty-five years did not soften her anger and bitterness, but one sees that strength and greatness retain all their prestige in her eyes. Weakness, want of energy, found her pitiless. She entirely forgives the author of her woes; in her place she would have done the same; if she could, she would act the same toward her son. She does not forgive those who submit and bow down. She was born to command, and also to despise those who obey. At length, on the 11th of November, 1829, she let a scornful assent escape her. Jerome could marry his Miss Williams,—he had been married on the 3d,—but a phrase in a letter from her father did not pass without protestations. "You ask me if I still have the right to

blame Jerome, I who deserted my family and my country. When after twenty-four years I returned to that country, to that family, what did I find? A cruel and brutal reception. Perhaps God will forgive you, but do not expect that I can forgive. I owe nothing to my family and I have a right to remain away." Then she is amazed that anyone of good sense should reproach her for having left a place where neither her beauty nor her intelligence was admired. She holds to this point and keeps returning to it. The less one alludes to her voluntary exile the better it is for all. She refrained from every complaint, she killed her griefs and sufferings, she never spoke of them, and does not now except with respect: this is all that anyone can ask of her. If her son should die before her and without children, she will leave her fortune to her family; but for God's sake let him have the sense to believe that she judges and appreciates to their full extent the marks of interest she has received from her family. Her son being what he is, perhaps after all his grandfather had a right to marry him in America; but let no one speak to her of what he does —to her, at odds with her family. She understood how to live as she wished and where she wished, in the only place where

she could forget the griefs with which she has been overwhelmed.

She then begs her father to send her a copy of her will drawn up in favour of her son, without any possible reversion to her daughter-in-law. She was to survive him by seven years, and leave to her grandchildren a fortune of seven millions and a half.

Her correspondence discloses in a cruel but true and clear light the character of this American woman whom circumstances hindered from playing an important rôle. Of no use outside the circle where the destiny of Europe was in question, she was a grand figure within it. The quiet and obscurity of private life did not suit her: she said so, and we cannot contradict her. Sister-in-law of an emperor and wife of a king, with a crown on her forehead she would have defended it with a hero's energy. Prince Gortschakoff was not deceived when he said: "With that woman on the steps of the throne the fall of the Empire would have given us much more trouble." And Talleyrand added: "What a queen she would have been!" Napoleon did not know her; he was mistaken in thinking his brother had made a *mésalliance.* She knew that he had not, and did not hesitate to say so and to set it down in writing.

## III.

Since the time when Elizabeth Patterson spoke so disdainfully of the mediocrity of American fortunes, and of the quiet rôle of the married woman of the United States, many changes have taken place. These American fortunes have become the greatest in the world, and the society whose portrait she traced, animated by spite, and which she accused (sometimes wrongly) of relegating women to the tamest occupations, has opened to woman a field much larger than the one she occupies in Europe.

No one has better brought out this last point than Professor Bryce in his interesting work entitled *The American Commonwealth*, wherein he notes with an unerring precision the contrast between the social and legal position of the American woman and that of the English woman—a contrast all the more striking because the United States have received from England, with their social conditions, their morals, their customs, their legal code and their common law. But this common law originally made woman a mere thing, the chattel of man, inferior to him, subordinate in everything. They were one, but man alone personified the union;

he was the one and she was the zero, without rights, incapable of buying or selling, of directing or even of controlling the education of her own children. If, since then, successive modifications introduced into England in the common law have modified what then was excessive and evil in it, the Americans have not waited for this gradual change, due to the progress of civilisation, to repudiate from the start the greatest part of these traditions of another age. And it is not only in the legal domain that they have acted thus; socially it is the same. "Nowhere else," writes Mr. Bryce, confirming the assertions of all those who have lived in the United States, "has a woman, and especially a young girl, such a happy life. The world is at her feet. Society seems formed for her pleasure. Father, mother, uncles, aunts, friends, give up their convenience and their tastes to hers. The young woman has a much less share of worldly pleasure, because, except among the rich classes, she is more absorbed than the European woman by home duties, the servants being relatively costly and only imperfectly trained. But," says Mr. Bryce, and on this point we differ a little from him, "the position which she occupies in her home is superior to that of the English or

even of the French woman. We do not speak now," he says, "of the German woman, whose rôle is absolutely inferior." He proves his assertion by the surprise which the relations existing between English husbands and wives excite in American women. When it happens that they receive English friends, they are struck, they say, by the excessive deference which under all circumstances the English woman pays her husband. She consults his convenience and his tastes, in amusements, in going out, in making visits, in shopping. It is not perhaps absolutely the same in France, where the woman moves more freely in a larger sphere. American women recognise this, but they think that, if the result is in France different, the starting point is the same. It is to the skill and wise tact of the French women that they attribute an equality which, according to them, is only apparent, whereas in the United States the duty and the desire also of a husband is to consult his wife's tastes, and to do for her what the Englishman expects his wife to do for him. The contrast is stronger, according to Mr. Bryce, in the social life of the drawing-rooms, where, he says, the fine ear of the American lady perceives in the voice of the European who speaks to her a note

of condescension to which she is not accustomed, and in his manners a shade of superiority which surprises her. "Then, even when a woman has the advantage of rank over him, of social position, of intelligence and of wit, the European considers himself above her, simply because he is a man, and lets her understand it. Such an idea never occurs to an American. He speaks to a woman as he would speak to an equal, with more deference in the form, choosing by preference subjects which interest her, but treating them as he would with a man, whose opinion in his eyes would be as valuable as his own. On her side, the American woman does not expect him to sustain the whole burden of a conversation; she considers it her duty to be agreeable, to converse, and to please. If it is a question of courtesies, she claims the rights belonging to her sex."

Indeed, she never gives them up, and even exaggerates them at times; and a curious connection may be made out between the oft-merited praises which Mr. Bryce, English as he is, gives to American women, and the frequently harsh criticisms of American writers; and that not for the pleasure of contradicting observations made in equal good faith, but to note once more one of these characteristic traits which to some

extent form the heart of a character, side by side with that which is more apparent, and which has harmed American women more than more serious faults. In the *North American Review* of September, 1890, an article appeared which caused a sensation in the United States as much by the ability of the author, Mr. O. Fay Adams, as by the title he chose: *The Mannerless Sex.* "I have to do with women," said Mr. Adams in his first sentences, "and I know beforehand that I am going to oppose all the accepted ideas; but what can I do if these ideas rest on a purely imaginary basis? For a long time we have heard in every form that women exert a good influence over our manners, that by their example they refine and polish them. Many people end by believing this in spite of evidence. The men believe it, or affect to believe it, through gallantry; as to the women, they are thoroughly convinced of it."

There is absolutely nothing in this claim, in the United States at least, says the author; and if the men in their intercourse with one another adopted the manners which the women exhibit outside of their homes, their bold egotism and unpleasant manner, it would soon make social life impossible. To justify his assertions Mr. Adams cites a

number of cases taken from the details of every-day life, and notes the following points:

First, the indifference with which woman subordinates the convenience of others to her caprices; and this especially in the case of young girls.

Second, the scornful tranquillity with which she makes her men and women visitors dance attendance upon her, a characteristic trait of women who are no longer young.

Third, the impossibility of her allowing a speaker to finish what he or she is saying, before speaking, a trait common to all women, as is:

Fourth, the impossibility of being exact, and their rudeness toward one another.

For reasons on which the author says there is no need of insisting, because everyone knows them, this rudeness is less noticeable toward the men. It none the less exists, he says, only it appears in another form. Enter a railway station and take your place in line. A woman arrives and goes right through the gate without the least thought of those who are waiting for their turn. She calls for a ticket, says she is in haste, and asks of the agent, whom she has under her thumb, so to speak, the end-

less information which he can give. If anyone requests her to take her place in the line, she thinks him impertinent and lets him know it. She wishes neither to wait nor to hurry; the thought does not occur to her that she is encroaching upon the rights of those who have come before her; and if the impatient ticket-agent asks her to make way for those behind, and to ask her questions of some other official, she goes off indignant at the man's insolence. The same manner and the same unreasonableness she shows in every public place—in the post-offices, at concerts and at the theatres, says Mr. Adams. Everywhere she claims the first place without the least thought of others, monopolising the time and attention of clerks whom she besets with questions without always listening to their answers. "But," he adds, "it is in the dry-goods shops that we see her unconscious egotism. From the moment when she crosses the threshold, and carelessly lets the door swing back on those who are behind her, to the hour when she leaves, there is not one minute when she does not show the deepest disdain for the convenience of her fellow-beings. For hours she compels the unhappy employés to unroll dress-goods which she has not an idea of buying; she makes in a

loud and strident voice insulting remarks on the slowness and stupidity of the clerks; she displaces and drops things with the utmost indifference; she stares insolently at her neighbours from head to foot; she obstructs the aisles; and her umbrella is an everlasting threat to the eyes of those about her. When at last she leaves, having accomplished nothing of what she should have done, and much that she should not have done, she goes home with as easy a conscience as a saint of the Middle Ages after a day given up to pious works; in her home she says with complacence that men understand nothing of the art of buying, and that women alone possess it. Let us thank God, my brethren, that it is so." The author says, and we shall leave to him the responsibility of his assertions, that if among his equals the men seemed as rude as many women, their day would not end without their receiving some well-merited lessons.

So strong a criticism could not pass unnoticed. A Mr. Croffut has answered Mr. Adams, but is it really an answer? "We admit," he says, "the truth of these facts, and we appreciate how much is lacking in the manners of a large number of American women in public. But the fault is less theirs than the men's, whose absurd gal-

lantry and ridiculous tolerance have encouraged this unreasonableness. We only need mention as proof of this the fact that the American woman alone is considered here the cause of it, and we cannot reproach European women of the same class for a similar manner." He adds that one rarely sees in Europe a woman accept a man's offer of a seat without a word of thanks, or presuming on her sex to sustain her in ignoring the obligation of taking her place in a crowd, at the theatre, in a car, in a post-office or a bank. Nothing is more simple, be it understood, than to put American women in their proper place, and to convert them, like their European sisters, into discreet and courteous persons. It is the man's affair and not the woman's.

In noting these caprices, which the majority of travellers in the United States have remarked with more or less insistence, we have gone by preference to American sources, which are without a doubt less to be suspected of prejudice. The one that Mr. Adams advances is a true one, and Mr. Croffut's no less so. What they say confirms our former assertions as to the excessive liberty which young girls and women enjoy in the United States, the exaggerated idea which they have of their rights and

privileges, and the men's extreme courtesy toward them. But it would be a great error to see in the criticism of Mr. Adams a true and faithful portrait of the American woman, to regard these characteristics universal, and to attribute to all the unreasonableness which shocks the Americans themselves just as much when they contrast it with the manners of the most of their countrywomen. Those who find more to blame than to approve of in American women, and girls especially, those whom their free manners shock with their independence, their taste for luxury, and their craving for admiration, often make a text of all this in order to bring an indictment against the democratic institutions of the United States. All things considered, the result could not be otherwise, the starting point being given, namely, the constant intimacy between young men and girls, the equality of the sexes, made into an axiom, the withdrawal of the parents, the children's independence, the preferences freely declared, and the choice freely made. The caprice that is so marked is, according to them, the inevitable consequences of a democracy instinctively opposed to the principle of authority, striving in everything to reduce to a minimum any active control, and

extolling equality with an apostle's zeal and practising it with the fervour of a proselyte.

But then would these pretended apostles of equality, these would-be levellers of privileges, ask to re-establish inequality to the advantage of woman, to make her the privileged one *par excellence*, and, taking the reverse of the Asiatic conception, raise her to despotism and convert man to the position of a subject? We all greatly exaggerate the influence of political institutions over social customs. Unstable and fickle, the former change according to the play of passion or the necessity of the moment. It is not so with the other, with the usages and customs which rely on unbroken traditions, and on a long transmission. They change but slowly; they are the result of an experience of a hundred years, and in their evolution do not act by sudden jerks. There exists at heart more than one imagines common to the American and the Englishman in their relations with women, and the largest part in the woman of the United States, that greatest independence which she enjoys, comes as much from the change of surroundings as from the intellectual superiority which she knew how to attain from the start, and which she has for a long time retained.

But as the United States grow and become refined the space between the two sexes decreases. The time has passed when the fight against nature absorbed the American; the forests are cut down, the land cultivated, the Indian reservations are dying out; the great rivers, once obstacles to communication, are converted into mighty arteries of commerce; an immense network of roads and railroads connects all parts of the Union; and the public school system, largely endowed and widely extended, has considerably raised the intellectual level, and restored a part of his superiority to man. The United States possess to-day illustrious scholars, eminent lawyers, celebrated physicans, professors known and appreciated in Europe, writers of the first rank; and if from an artist's view-point they cannot yet rival the Old World, we must take into account the relative youth of their civilisation and the promise of the future which we saw in the exhibit of their paintings at Paris in 1889. If, then, from an intellectual standpoint, man has to a great extent taken possession of the territory which woman occupied, if he has not only shortened the distance which separates him from her, but also gained an advantage which more strongly developed faculties, a more robust constitution, and a

more evenly balanced will give him, there is, nevertheless, a social province of which he neither can nor wants to rob her, because this province is one of traditions, of concessions made by him, and accepted and extended by her. Just here appears the contrast between the ideas of the Anglo-Saxon and of the Latin race—the antithesis between the Eastern conception and that of the West, the two extreme points of which are Asia and the United States, with Central and Southern Europe as the middle term. A maximum and a minimum of human individuality correspond to these two extremes. Nowhere is this individuality so marked as in the United States, nowhere is it so dimly seen as in the extreme East. England has transmitted to the United States, with this stock of individuality characteristic of the race and more marked than elsewhere in Europe, that respect for individuals which was early seen in the laws and institutions of Britain.

It is to her everlasting honour that she first proclaimed the rights of individuals, and by the habeas corpus laid the corner-stone of her Constitution. In the social organisation, in morals and customs, it was not so; certain contradictions existed inherent to these historic causes, to feudal traditions and monarchical usages; class

distinction, primogeniture, the authority of the head of the family, woman's subordinate position—all these had but little in common with the principle of individuality and equality, but in this classic land of compromises their harmony was bound to come, and it was only a question of time; the idea of justice deeply rooted in the conscience, and the mind little by little removed the obstacles which hindered its realisation. Harmony was brought about in England, more in the groundwork itself than in the form; the exterior remained unchanged feudal and monarchical, but behind this decoration of another age rose a new world. Of class distinction only that was kept which was thought necessary to the preserving of the monarchical form; the hereditary peerage opened its doors to the intellectual. From their birthright came the independence of the younger sons of a family freed from paternal authority which was despotic from the day when it existed without compensation for the future. Finally, woman without a *dot* became freer in her choice, more independent in her manner, in one word, more individual, than she was in any other European country. What was more logical? The homage rendered changed its object; it was given to her, to a distinct individuality

more than to her sex in general. There was something personal and limited in it, of different degrees, excluding all disrespect from its gallantry, which had but poorly hidden vulgar desire under a vulgar form. Thus in the sphere in which she moves the Englishwoman is more protected than the woman on the Continent. That which survives of class distinction binds her to an order of things where she has the position she desires. She is screened and sheltered. Great lady or servant, urban or rustic, she has her own world, her equals, whose idea is her law, whose good or bad opinion has much weight with her in that she cannot appeal from their verdict to any other social tribunal. From this comes the need of harmony in the class to which one belongs; from this also the concessions often hypocritical, and which are often called "English cant." It is the love of exterior decorum, of form and appearance. We find at every round of the social ladder, with man as with woman, everywhere, a human being at the mercy of his passions and social demands, striving to unite the satisfaction of the one with respect for the other.

If it is not peculiar to England, this hypocrisy is more common there than elsewhere, sure, as it is, of a tacit accomplice in

public opinion, disarmed, it seems, by the "homage which vice pays to virtue." The press assents to it, not without an occasional murmur of dissatisfaction; it affects to ignore debauchery and vice, and forms a conspiracy of silence about them. In order to show the extent to which these are carried it would have to run the risk of driving away its readers, especially the women, and of being accused of pandering to prurient curiosity.

Nothing, moreover, is a better proof of the influence that woman exerts on English literature than the English novel. It is she who makes its reputation and decides its success; it is she for whom the novelists write, anxious before all else for her approbation, which they win only by avoiding indelicate situations and by veiling too glaring pictures. Their books must be able to be put into any hand, to lie on the family table, and must respect accepted ideas and moral conventions. Whatever may be the inconvenience of this affectation of virtue, it has its advantages; and above all else it is comfortable; it allows certain social questions to remain unnoticed and to be hidden in shadow, so that we might conclude from the silence about them they do not exist, or at least that they exist only in exceptional

and accidental cases. It is useful, in so far as it suppresses notoriety and the scandal that in other countries is made over a world which the greater world despises.

This English *cant* is found in the United States modified by the existence of the religious element; here it is less an affectation of good taste than the manifestation of a moral instinct. It was once the fashion to jeer at the excessive prudery of Boston women, with their intolerance of certain customary terms, and who were shocked at the mere mention of a masculine garment. There were exaggerations, but less, however, than many suppose, of an ultra-puritanism, now vanished, the traces of which are hard to find. What survives is only a degree of reticence and the delicacy which woman has a right to expect from every well-bred man.

## IV.

Secluded in her family and social environment, the American woman has up to this time made but few and timid journeys into the sphere of politics. It does not appeal to her, and when the authors of the two celebrated novels *Democracy* and *Through One Administration* represent her among these surroundings, they avoid

giving her an active rôle. She figures only as an onlooker and supernumerary, and from these very stories it may be inferred how little real connection there is between her and the political world, and how little influence she really has over it or even pretends to have. It is not so of that world in which she ordinarily moves; and when we examine closely the various phases and details of life in the United States, we are struck by the part which woman plays and by the important place which she occupies in it. This is still more true in the case of those in moderate circumstances in the middle agricultural class, in the farms and settlements, and in the industrial centres, than in the large cities. Not that the latter do not possess curious types for study that are essentially original, and unite in the highest degree the demands of modern social life with the highest aspirations and an active philanthropy.

One expects little on meeting, in a large city like New York, a young girl, beautiful, rich, courted, flattered, who deliberately wards off all suitors and yet lives a social life, consecrating her existence and her fortune to the satisfaction of two unusual passions—charity and a taste for the beautiful. Such was Miss Catherine Lorillard

Wolfe, who recently died at the age of sixty-two, the richest woman, while she lived, in the United States. Notwithstanding her great charities she left a fortune, diminished it is true, but still more than five million dollars. It is estimated that she gave at least an equal amount in bequests to charities, donations to charitable institutions, to asylums and schools, and spent more than two million dollars upon the works of art which she collected in her home in New York, in her Newport villa, "Vineland," next to Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt's, the building of which cost more than three hundred thousand dollars.

She held a high position in New York society, and a still higher one in the hearts of the poor, who greatly mourned her death. Surely charity, a human instinct, is not a special virtue of the American. We see it in every country of the world and at every round of the social ladder. It is more often than we imagine associated with the possession of great wealth; it is its excuse, the reason for its existence; but it is here that this virtue is enshrined in a woman whose age, beauty, wealth, and tastes seem to incline toward a brilliant marriage and toward a successful worldly life, and who, without renouncing the rank which she

holds by force of her position and wealth, makes of her fortune the most noble and the most generous use.

If from the world of those who are called, and often wrongly, the fortunate ones of this earth, we pass to those other numerous beings to whom work is a necessity and strife a daily task, here again, more than anywhere else, woman's influence is revealed, filled, as was hers whose life we have briefly mentioned, with the inspiration of her mission, doing it without faltering, with helpful hands, and elevating and beautifying the souls about her. Her humble life is that of many another woman in many a far Western village which is fast becoming a populous city, in many a settlement in which a strong and healthy generation is rising reserved for the future, and which, like a flood, engulfs the new States of the Northwest. It has been our privilege to see the work of some of these representative women, and to measure the extent and importance of their work; and if among the examples that we remember, and those still more numerous which the history of the colonisation of the West during the past thirty years gives us, we prefer to stop before that mentioned by the author of a book entitled *Tendencies of American Life*, it is because

by the simplicity of the outline and the minute exactness of detail he brings into bold relief the kind of influence and its simple and efficacious methods to which we allude.

She was the daughter of an ordinary Eastern farmer, poor, honest, religious, and burdened with a family. Like her sisters and her companions, she became engaged at the early age of sixteen, and her lover being poor also, she went out to service on the neighbouring farm, working as he worked with the view of making a modest sum of money, with which they might go West and create a home. This took them three years, at the end of which time they married and settled four hundred miles away in the southern part of Kansas. The land there was cheap, the population sparse; the settlement consisted of only a dozen log cabins, scattered over an area of thirty miles. At first, everything went well; she helped him, kept house, and attended to the poultry. The first harvest was a good one, and the log cabin gave way to a comfortable farmhouse. About them the country became populated, immigration set in from the East and the West, and the farm improved and became of greater value. But new elements entered into this farming district.

Miners, disappointed in California, ranchmen from the prairies, outcasts from the great cities, came, drawn there by the success of the first settlers. The husband was among the number of the latter, a little unbalanced by his prosperity and by nature very social. Little by little he allowed himself to be led away, he worked less and spent more, frequented barrooms and deserted his home. Trouble entered the home. His wife saw him as he was; but at twenty-two, far from her relatives, her parents, without friends, without advice, first sadness and then discouragement seized upon her. She found the necessary consolation in her religion and in the remembrance of home teaching. She undertook to save her husband, to remove him from temptation, to bring back their former happiness. She succeeded with time, with patience, and with perseverance. Not without trouble and extreme economy she settled the debts, won back the husband, more weak than vicious, and spared him all reproach, only helping him by words of encouragement. After a few years—sad years, too, but not without glimpses of hope—she accomplished her task and regained the modest ease beyond which her ambition did not look. The first use she made of this was, having won her husband's

consent, to adopt two little homeless orphans. She had no children of her own, and the adopted ones filled their place. To them she devoted all the affection of an intelligent mother-love, and all unconsciously to her her example, like a seed sown in good soil, took root and grew. She was consulted, for her advice was honest; she was heeded, for she was sincere; she was loved, for she was good; and her influence broadened and grew.

The day came when she had another and a higher duty to perform, and she undertook it with the same serenity and courage. Thinking it too heavy to bear alone, she looked about her for aid and comfort, first to her husband, whose love and confidence and respect she possessed, and then to the village physician, for the settlement had become a village. Without hesitating he became her ally, such was the sympathy she inspired. To eliminate or reform the dangerous elements from their neighbourhood, by the church and the school, to fight the wicked, to arouse and elevate the rising generation, to eradicate false ideas by good books, to create a social life, which would draw men away from the saloon, and to bring woman out from her solitude—such were her aims,

and she attained them by the same methods whose efficaciousness she had proved.

"To-day," writes her biographer, "she consecrates to others and to her own intellectual development the leisure which ease gives her, which she did not seek, but which came unasked. She reads much, she writes well and clearly, and Eastern newspapers have often published letters in which she shows a remarkable knowledge of the needs of the farming class. I had the opportunity of driving with her on some of her trips. As far away as the workers in the fields could see her they dropped their tools and ran to her, begging her to come into their homes and see their wives and children. There is nothing more touching than the affectionate homage of these rough men, nothing more charming than her manner toward them and the clasp she gives their rough hands. I dined with her friend the doctor; he told me the details of her life, and in so doing had difficulty in hiding his emotion. When he had finished, his wife uttered only one word: 'Here, you see, all women love her, and all men adore her.'"

Let us change the place and the conditions. Among other surroundings, starting from a different point, let us note the same forces still at work. Here no longer do we

talk of an exceptional case, but of a commonplace, because it is true and has no startling incidents—one of those private dramas that one meets everywhere, unconscious of its existence. The woman whose life the same observer writes belongs by education to the higher class. As a young girl she lived in ease. She chose for a husband a merchant of her own age, an honourable man, and on the road to fortune. The first years of their married life were prosperous; their reverses date from the business depression which followed the War of Secession. Anxious about the future, the husband converted into money what property he had, and leaving New York went, after the South became quiet, to live with his wife in one of the Carolinas. He bought there for a low price one of the many estates left by ruined proprietors. But he realised nothing from agriculture. The soil of the farm required enriching and intelligent labour to make it of value. He took account of this, but not until too late; and, being unable to meet the necessary expenses, he sold the farm at a loss and went to live in a little neighbouring village, where he put all that remained of his money into the purchase of a house, of which he could pay only half the price, giving a mortgage on the furniture for the

remainder. He counted on settling his debts with the money owed him, but this was not paid, and he was compelled to leave this last home, which represented all that was left. In the meantime two children had been born to them, and it was with difficulty that the father could support them by his labour. The wife resolved to help. She sold her piano, her last luxury, and bought a sewing-machine; but fifteen hours a day of constant toil brought her only three or four dollars a week, and the work exhausted her. To cap the climax, her husband was taken ill, and often during a long winter they lacked food and fuel. She struggled on, without giving up, with the unconscious heroism of good women in desperate situations. At this point we will quote the words of her biographer. He gives us a conversation which he had with her later on:

"And did no one come to your assistance?"

"No one knew how poor we were. I told no one. I might have met with more sympathy, perhaps, if I had spoken, if"—her voice trembled and her eyes filled with tears —"if I had made up my mind to expose our misery; but that—I could not do, and my clothes, though mended a score of times, were never ragged."

"Do you regret the past?"

"My marriage? No. As to the rest, what good would it do? I have no time to give to useless regrets."

"Did not your friends and neighbours seem selfish and cruel to you?"

"No. They had kind hearts; but they did not know, they could not guess—and I cannot blame them."

"Have you found support and help in religion?"

"Yes. Without that I should have given up, for the burden was so heavy to bear. I am not what they call a pious woman, but I had faith, and I believed in the justice and pity of God."

Her faith was simple, her heart brave. Fallen from a higher position, she was still a woman, careful of her family and of herself, hiding her misery, bearing it without faltering. Being well educated, and an artist, she made a distinguished woman of her daughter, who to-day manages one of the largest schools for women in the United States. She made of her son a man whose career promises to be brilliant. In her dauntless independence she looked only to God and to herself, never to another, not even to her own husband and children.

A country which produces such women has the right to be very proud of them.

## V.

Given the starting point of the American woman, her equality with man, her intellectual and social superiority, the charm of sex refined and developed by natural selection, and by the marriage of young girls, free in their choice, with a race of settlers, energetic, vigorous, profoundly imbued with religious conviction and with respect for the marriage tie, woman should necessarily appear, at any given moment, as the definite expression, the superior type, of the race and of her surroundings. She is all this to-day, and it is with a true pride that the American exhibits her to Europe as the most perfect work of a civilisation two centuries old.

And on this point Europe admits that he is right. The American woman is as popular there as the man is unpopular, notwithstanding his exceptional qualities. The proof lies in the reception which Europe gives to the American woman, and which is not given to her supposed fortune alone. Without doubt the traditions from across the Atlantic are modifying our view of the dowry, and the millionaires of the New World appear in

this more generous than our capitalists; but still there are exceptions to this rule. If the Princess Colonna, stepdaughter of the millionaire Mackay, received from her father-in-law a dowry which was double that which Baroness Burdett-Coutts brought by marriage to Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, a Member of Parliament, if we see in the far Western States—in Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada—rich miners who put their daughters on their wedding day upon one scale of a balance, and on the other an equal weight of gold bullion, this plutocratic generosity and the parvenu display are not the rule. They cannot explain the undisputed success of the American woman, the attraction which she inspires, the charm which she possesses. It seems as though on this essentially democratic soil nature reveals herself, in that which concerns her, as more aristocratic than elsewhere, and that the spirit of her choice is perpetually working there to the advancement of those she favours.

Of all the gifts which the soil affords one of the most characteristic is undeniably that of adaptability. Few European women possess to the same degree as do the American the faculty of identifying themselves with such marvellous ease with new surroundings, change of country, climate, and

conditions. Better than all others does she accommodate herself to circumstances while still preserving her individuality. The ties which bind her to her native city or village are not strong. She breaks them without pain; she emigrates without hesitation. A native of New York or Boston, of Baltimore or Philadelphia, she follows her husband to the Far West, or travels with him to London or Paris, to Munich or Rome, with perfect ease. Distance does not alarm her nor long journeys restrain her. It seems as though she had no native country, so easily does she adopt as her own the land whither destiny leads her—Melbourne or Hong Kong, Chile or the Indies. Everywhere she carries her happy disposition with her, her optimistic ideas of life, her gift of finding some good in everything. She is the true daughter of a nomadic race, given to roving, indifferent as to where she is, holding fast to that which helps her to accomplish her ambition, to that in which her husband's energy finds a wider and freer field. The American girl does not hesitate for one instant to marry the man that pleases her, even if she must follow him to the Antipodes, and spend there the best years of her life. The same future which would make a French girl, and perhaps still more her parents

hesitate, has no deterrent influence upon the American. For years she has been familiar with this possibility; she knows by experience that the American "home" is not a fixture, that it is easily moved, and that nothing in the United States is rarer than a life spent in a single city. She sees about her the incessant movement of emigration, from one State to another, from one city to another.

It is only possessors of assured wealth who do not move thus; but even with them the nomadic instinct prevails. Europe attracts them, and they go there with a readiness which astonishes the European, holding as nothing the fatigue and discomfort of an ocean voyage, crossing the Atlantic as a tourist crosses Lake Leman, pitching their tents in all places and in all cities. Thus the American woman is English in London, French in Paris or Nice or Cannes, and Italian at Rome or Naples or Florence. In short, she is cosmopolitan. The tie which binds her to her own land is very slender, and no less slender is that which holds her to her relatives and family. Early she is imbued with the idea that her surroundings are only temporary, that they are the result of chance circumstances in which her wish, her individuality, herself, have no part, that

the time will come when other elements will enter into play, and that then and only then she will have to make a decision. For that she must free herself from every habit, from every troublesome attachment, and in the considerations which determine her choice she, and she alone, must assign to each its true place and real importance. By her woman's instinct she will ordinarily assign the first place to her personal inclination, to her heart, and next to her ambition. Before these two considerations the others fade away, or at least become secondary. Her education has developed her powers of discrimination and strengthened her sense of responsibility.

In all this she differs greatly from the French girl, otherwise brought up, accustomed to see in marriage, before all else, an association of interests and an emancipation from guardianship. With the French the home does not change; if the language has not the word, the people have the thing. About the home permanent friends and associates are found; they sustain and mutually uphold one another; they are part of a community, a large or small city, in which each member of the collective body has his relations, his occupations, his interests, and his friendships. Again, the family

ties are strong; they both retain and sustain one. Here the French girl lives, grows, observes; she is imbued with the ideas of her surroundings, and rarely has any others; her ambition, for her and hers, consists on her wedding-day in adding a new home to those already existing. The nearer it is to the one she leaves the more desirable it seems. They wish it to be, if not in the same house, at least in the same street, in the same quarter, and at any rate in the same city. To extend this choice of a husband over the whole of France is much to expect of her and hers; over Europe, too much; over the world, not to be thought of. This limitation of choice does not exist in the United States. Independence is too great there, one's personality is too strong for one to accustom one's self to such close ties. Everything that impairs individual liberty is avoided as an obstacle which hinders action, as an artificial barrier which limits the horizon. This horizon must be as wide as possible, that man's activity may have free play. From the moment when one thinks that life is, by the fact of social organisation, for the greatest number a field open to every effort, two solutions arise: to meet the unknown boldly, relying only on one's self, on one's intelligence,

will, and perseverance, and possessing courage and room for its exercise, as did the settler and the emigrant; or to advance only cautiously, setting aside many a favourable opportunity, upheld and sustained by one's kindred, hemmed in by a special career, itself supported by certain conditions of advancement which have been foreseen and justified by precedent, marked by regular steps, among the number of which is marriage, which establishes the man in classifying the woman, and which strengthens his position and increases the property of the one by the *dot* of the other.

This last is the French idea, wise, prudent, conforming to traditions, having only a moderate ambition, seeing most often only one aim, not far off, putting established interests and a tranquil life above all. The other is the point of view of the American man and woman. If to save their religious faith and their individual liberty their ancestors did not hesitate to leave their fatherland, to cross the Atlantic at a time when such a voyage was long and dangerous, and to engage in a war against nature and the Indians, no more do their descendants hesitate to emigrate from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific, to the Indies, or to Australia.

It is another motive which makes them act, but it is as powerful as that which moved their fathers, and they use many other means of action. As is the woman so is the American man cosmopolitan, more awkwardly than she, and in appearance less adaptable than she, yet like her indifferent to his environment so that it offers him the chances of success which he desires. Among new surroundings, whatever they are, he makes himself at home; his individuality, more marked than that of his companion, and far less refined, persists; cosmopolitan in fact, he will remain American, and as such is more angular, more positive in his ideas, his wishes, and his tastes, and also less pleasing and less popular than she; but he cannot help this, and he goes forward with his eyes fixed on his goal. The considerations which predominate with the French girl when her marriage is spoken of, the only act of her life in which her will can act and ought to be consulted, are not at all those which appeal to a young American girl. Necessarily their conception of life is different. The American girl applies herself with all her strength to the precepts of the Bible; she leaves her family, her friends, her country, to follow the husband whom she chooses, and in doing this she imposes

no painful sacrifice, no sad separation. Together they commence the struggle for existence, but without asking or expecting anything from others. According to their ideas and traditions it is not the parent's duty to provide for the needs of the children when the children leave them to make a home for themselves; it is not for the old to stint themselves for the young. These axioms are familiar to both. Later on they will apply them to their children as they do now to themselves. It is for them to choose their home, their surroundings; the world is open to them, nothing interferes with their choice, and nothing is required for their aid and assistance.

Thus one explains how the progress of even the most advanced civilisation is reconciled by the American with his persistent and primitive nomadic instincts. He seems, we might say, to have no country. He has one, however, but it is centred in an intellectual and moral domain, independent of soil, of climate, and of the outward and material aspect of nature. This fatherland follows him, it does not hold him back; it exists in his love for his institutions, for their political forms which the American thinks superior to all others, in his religious convictions, and also in his traditions and in

the history of which he is so proud, in the astonishing prosperity of the Union of which he is a part, and from which he never breaks away, however far he may go. It is an ideal country, but for him a real one, of which, wherever he is, he is both a son and a representative, in which he openly claims citizenship, which he defends vigorously against every criticism, and which he loves as much as any European loves his own, but without being tormented by the wish to see it once again or to end his days within its boundaries.

On this point the American woman has the same feeling, but shows it with more reticence and tact. Her patriotism is less aggressive as she is more cosmopolitan; and this very quality tends to soften and even to smooth away the angles of nationality, to prevent them clashing, and to substitute for anything antagonistic a vague nationalism resting not on the difference of races and of soil, of languages and of beliefs, but on similarity of social position, of fortune, of tastes, and of worldly conditions. This explains that which we said above, that she is more adaptable and more popular than he.

Few nations increase so rapidly in population as the American, and this is the result of the complete accord between man and

woman. Both consider nationality as independent of the soil, holding that emigration and voluntary exile are only a test or a piece of self-denial, and that they are not a confession of impotence. One of the causes which most hinders the growth of French colonies is the instinctive repugnance of the French girl and of her family to the idea of emigration, as being associated (and this has a show of reason) with that of the outcast. As long as emigration to our distant colonies continues to recruit itself almost exclusively from the petty trading classes, the incompetent, the adventurous, or the adventurers, just so long will families refuse to recognise, save in exceptional cases, the fitness of a young girl's marrying a man who will take her away from all her relatives.

Whether this feeling is just or not is of little importance ; the fact of it remains, and the opinion of most French women on this point is one of the most serious obstacles to our colonisation. The sedentary and conservative instinct of our race is distrustful not of the strangers who come, and to whom we accord a cordial reception which their past does not always justify, but of persons who emigrate in the hope of bettering their lot. Apart from the functionary in whom the official *cachet* takes the place of all else,

the voluntary colonist will have trouble in the upper or even in the middle classes in finding a companion disposed to unite her lot to his, and to break away from the traditional paths. It was not always so, and, curiously enough, it has only been so in any marked degree since steamers have shortened the distances, since remote communication has become regular and easy, since instruction has grown more thorough and more widely spread, since liberal ideas have prevailed, since class barriers have been broken and since democracy began to reign. We encourage bold explorers, the pioneers of civilisation in new lands, but we do not follow them. We welcome the creation of a colonial empire, which we do not ourselves enter; we vote millions for building cities which are not populated, for roads that are not used; and the very men who sanction this use of the public money consider themselves imprudent in risking even a little capital in the private enterprises connected with plantations and manufactures which they are then astonished not to see rising from colonial soil.

If the Englishman emigrates, if the American emigrates, it is because in doing so he shocks none of those accepted ideas which are everywhere more efficacious than the

laws. It is because he in no way lessens his social position, any more than he lessens his chances regarding her whom he may desire to marry. The American woman has in this case the same ideas as the man, both having been brought up in the same way: their ideas are those of their common surroundings, and those which have made the United States what they are to-day; those of their ancestors, as they will be those of their children. Wherever one meets the American woman—and we meet her everywhere, among the ranks of the English peerage and in the highest European aristocracy as well as among the most modest surroundings—one is struck by this marvellous adaptability, in which scientists see the characteristic and infallible indication of the superiority of a race or of a class. Whoever has travelled cannot help noticing it. It shows itself particularly in the happy disposition with which the American woman accepts the many little vexations which every change of surroundings brings about, and which put the most perfect character to a severe test. She submits without an effort and has no harsh word to utter; she is prepared for such a life by her education, and does not expect to find everything perfect. Moreover, the necessity of manual labour does not appear to her degrad-

ing ; at the most it is only one or two generations that separate her from the time when her grandmother herself kneaded the bread for her family in the days of the early settlements. These traditions are familiar to her, and the lessons which they teach do not discourage or humiliate her. She is the daughter of a race of emigrants, now become a mighty nation by toil, by energy, and by will. She has at her very door a whole treasury of traditions, into which she is proud to delve. In her, now and then, we can seem to hear the voice of those noble women of a past age, who were once *émigrées* and reduced to poverty, relating with pride in their memoirs how, in order to supply their wants, they worked in London or in Germany, willingly utilising their talents and their good taste in tying ribbons or making gowns with their aristocratic fingers.

The American woman has no more false pride or foolish self-love than they. Without travelling around the world one can see her in the Paris she so loves, at Nice, at Pau, at Cannes, in Switzerland, everywhere at ease, the first to laugh at her own mistakes in language, or at her own ignorance of continental customs. Wherever it may be, she seems perfectly at home ; and she is really so, for the land which pleases her is, while she

dwells there, her adopted country. The thought that she may appear ridiculous never occurs to her; it does not even occur to her that a woman can be so, or that any man should think her so. So great is her confidence—a confidence justified by experience, and one which the privileges of her sex allow her—that she has no timid reserve or painful bashfulness. As a young girl the homage she receives does not embarrass her, nor does attention disconcert her. She is used to it, and frankly shows the pleasure which it gives her. She is the result of a mode of education and of a manner of living which differ very greatly from ours. She has been taught to rely upon herself and to judge for herself. In men's society she has always been a free but responsible guardian of her own honour, and has planned her own future. She has seen and observed; she does not ignore the difficulties of life nor the dangers of independence. If we object to this premature knowledge, because under a brilliant and lively manner it often makes her coldly calculating and prematurely cautious, we may remember that sooner or later it is necessary for her to draw her own conclusions from the world in which she lives, and that it is perhaps better that her eyes be opened and that her judgment be made be-

fore the choice which decides her fate, than after. It is difficult in studying such a question to separate one's self sufficiently from the customs and ideas of one's surroundings, and to be absolutely impartial. Instinctively we incline toward accepted ideas, toward familiar customs and current axioms, and these are with us still too different from those across the Atlantic for the latter not to awaken in us strong objections. Other things being equal, experience alone is to be considered, and it is only by the results actually reached that correct judgments can be formed. This experience in the present instance is conclusive, and the results are satisfactory.

We have not in this study of the women of the United States either concealed the serious inconveniences which, along with the excessive liberty allowed young girls, permit legislation too lax in the matter of marriage and too easy in the matter of divorce; nor have we left in the shadow, so indulgent to error, the unpleasant things everywhere noticed by travellers. We have looked to American sources, considering them as the most impartial, and as confirmed also by observations which we have ourselves made during a long sojourn in America. But detailed criticism, serious

and severe as it may be, affects but little the conclusions which it reaches. If to-day the American Union is one of the leading countries of the world, this is owing to a great extent to the American woman, who was, and who is still, an important factor in its astonishing prosperity. The United States are indebted to her for having kept in their religious faith a principle of vitality which the Pilgrim Fathers brought over to America. She has been a successful toiler in the task first set before her. She has maintained that which she created, and has extended and enlarged it by church and school. In times of trouble, during the War of Independence and later during the War of Secession, woman's patriotism sustained man's courage. Under all circumstances she has been his companion and his equal. As such he has respected her; and this respect which she inspired by her sacrifices and her bravery at the beginning, and afterward by her intelligence and her education, by her charms and by her confidence in his protection, has influenced American morals, and has deeply imbued them with the feeling that respect for woman is for man one of the first conditions of moral life. This moral life is her own work; she has created and preserved it. In the devotion of

which she is the object, in the homage which man pays to her, there is something higher and far better than what the charms of her sex inspire, for there is in them the instinctive recognition of a great and healthful influence that has been nobly used.

THE END.